

# MELA NOTES

Middle East Librarians Association

Number 91 (2018)



**MELA NOTES**  
**Journal of Middle Eastern Librarianship**  
**Number 91 (2018)**

ISSN 0364-2410

PUBLISHED BY THE MIDDLE EAST LIBRARIANS ASSOCIATION

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## **Cairo Office Serials Collection: A Comparative Analysis**

AHMED MOSTAFA EL-SAYYED  
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, CAIRO OVERSEAS OFFICE

This is a follow-up to an article previously publishing in *MELA Notes* concerning the cooperative aspect of the serials acquired from the Cairo Overseas Office of the Library of Congress,<sup>1</sup> and was the basis of a presentation given at the 2018 MELA annual meeting in San Antonio.

Library of Congress, Cairo Overseas Office, is responsible for acquiring and maintaining continuity and control of more than 3,401 serials published chiefly in the 20 core countries it covers, in addition to serial titles originating in European countries with widespread distribution in the region. It is worth noting that a title is considered active when at least one issue has been received in the office within the last five years. There are several factors that contribute to the exact number of active serial titles acquired from these countries, such as supplier performance, the relative strength/weakness of a country's commercial and academic publishing industry, and the distribution channels through which serials flow. In addition, the security situation of these countries also plays a critical role.<sup>2</sup>

This study was prepared from Cairo Office's legacy serial database that it uses to monitor and track receipts of serials titles for the Library of Congress (LC) and the 45 participating libraries in the Middle East Cooperative Acquisitions Program (MECAP). It also takes into account notes and comments from our regular suppliers of serials from the countries covered by Cairo Office, as well as anecdotal observations made during acquisition trips.

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AE<sup>1</sup> William J. Kopycki and Ahmed Mostafa el-Sayyid "Cooperating to build a national collection of serials: Library of Congress, Cairo Overseas Office," *MELA Notes* 90 (2017): 1–12.

<sup>2</sup> Notably, as of this writing, Libya and Yemen, which are engulfed in conflict.

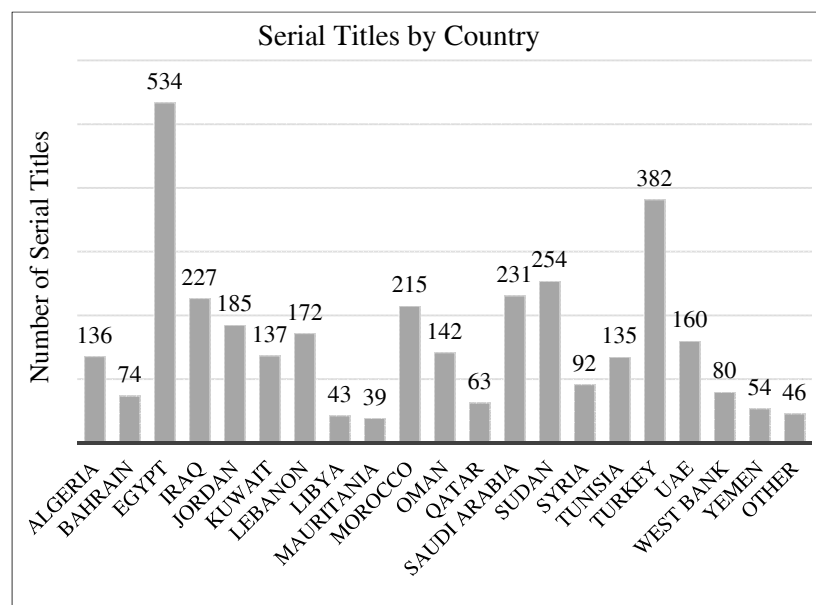
In this study I will try to highlight some important and interesting analytical figures about the serials collection in the Library of Congress, and how this is reflected in the serials that are supplied to participants in the MECAP program. To better understand these trends, I will make my analysis based on Country, Ordering Trends, Language of Publication, and Frequency of Publication. In addition, I will present data for newspapers as a subset of serials, since newspapers seem to be of special interest to the MELA community and the Center for Research Libraries' Middle East Materials Project (MEMP).

#### **A. Analysis by Country**

Following are two charts showing the general breakdown of serials by country. It is natural that Cairo Office's host country of Egypt should have a high volume of individual titles, but it is also clear which countries are active in producing serial titles. It is important to mention that these numbers reflect the selection policies of the Library of Congress; the Library does not collect every serial title produced by a country and in fact regularly rejects titles when they are too general, not seen as adding value to the collection, or are otherwise not found to be in-scope for the collections. "Other countries" are countries that are not included in Cairo Office's geographical coverage scope from which we nevertheless acquire due to distribution in the region. These especially include the United Kingdom, France, Cyprus, and others.

Number of Serials by Country			
Country	Number of Serial Titles	Country	Number of Serial Titles
Algeria	136	Qatar	63
Bahrain	74	Saudi Arabia	231
Egypt	534	Sudan	254
Iraq	227	Syria	92
Jordan	185	Tunisia	135
Kuwait	137	Turkey	382
Lebanon	172	UAE	160
Libya	43	West Bank	80
Mauritania	39	Yemen	54
Morocco	215	Other	46
Oman	142	<b>Total</b>	<b>3,401</b>





From these charts we can see that Egypt, Turkey, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq, in that order, have the largest number of serial titles acquired through Cairo Office.

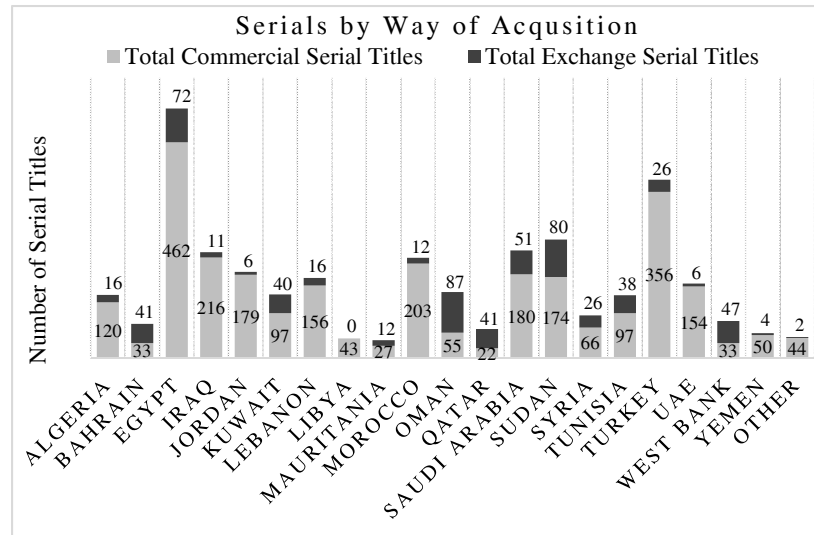
Country	Number of Serial Titles
Egypt	534
Turkey	382
Sudan	254
Saudi Arabia	231
Iraq	227

It is interesting to see that the number of serial titles acquired from Sudan is more than what is being acquired from Lebanon, Jordan, Morocco, and even Saudi Arabia. Egypt and Turkey, as expected, have the largest number of serial titles acquired.

Cairo Office acquires serials both through commercial and gift/exchange channels. Commercial titles are available for all MECAP participants, while exchange titles are only acquired for the Library of Congress and some MECAP participant such as the National Library of Medicine. In rare cases, a title received as a gift may be available to one or two requesting MECAP libraries as long as the publisher is willing to give extra copies as gifts. There are also

some other cases when a serial title fluctuates between being available commercially and available only as gifts.

<b>Number of Serial Titles by Way of Acquisition</b>			
<b>Country</b>	<b>Total No. of Titles</b>	<b>Total Commercial Serial Titles</b>	<b>Total Exchange Serial Titles</b>
Algeria	136	120	16
Bahrain	74	33	41
Egypt	534	462	72
Iraq	227	216	11
Jordan	185	179	6
Kuwait	137	97	40
Lebanon	172	156	16
Libya	43	43	0
Mauritania	39	27	12
Morocco	215	203	12
Oman	142	55	87
Qatar	63	22	41
Saudi Arabia	231	180	51
Sudan	254	174	80
Syria	92	66	26
Tunisia	135	97	38
Turkey	382	356	26
UAE	160	154	6
West Bank	80	33	47
Yemen	54	50	4
Other	46	44	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,401</b>	<b>2,767</b>	<b>634</b>



From these charts we can see that the total number of serials commercially acquired is 2,767 titles, which is about 81 percent of our serials collection. On the other hand, the total number of serials acquired through exchange and gift channels is 634 titles, which is about 19 percent of our serials collection.

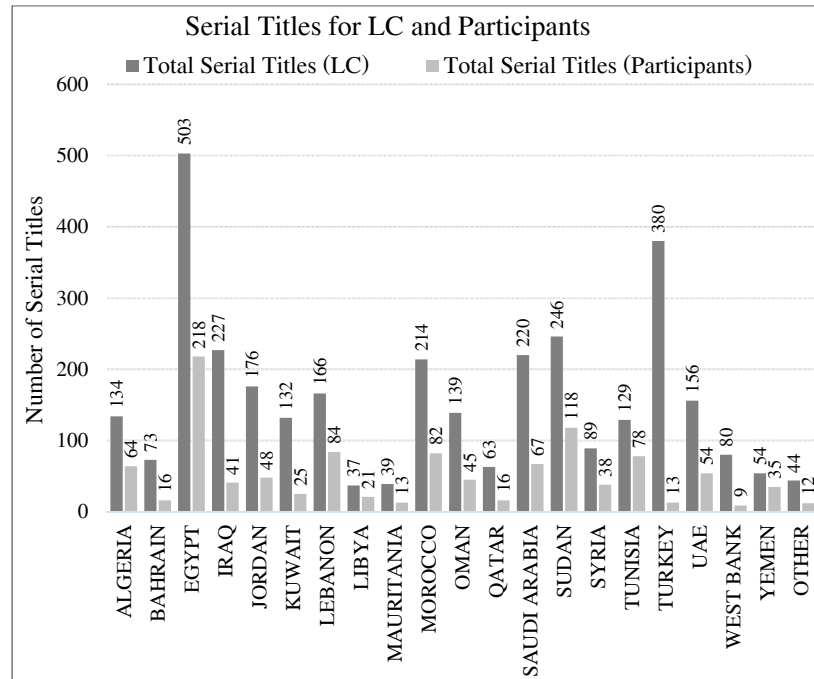
Egypt, Turkey, Iraq, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia, in that order, have the largest number of serials acquired on a commercial basis through Cairo Office. On the other hand: Oman, Sudan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the West Bank, respectively, have the largest number of serials acquired on an exchange basis through Cairo Office.

Country	Total Commercial Serial Titles
Egypt	462
Turkey	356
Iraq	216
Morocco	203
Saudi Arabia	180

Country	Total Exchange Serial Titles
Oman	87
Sudan	80
Egypt	72
Saudi Arabia	51
West Bank	47

Cairo Office acquires 3,301 serial titles for LC, while acquiring 1,097 serial titles for MECAP participants. Of these, 100 serial titles are for MECAP participants only (of which 43 serial titles are being acquired for the National Library of Medicine), while 1,685 commercial serial titles are for LC only with no orders placed for participants. In the charts below, I compare the Library of Congress' serial collection vis-à-vis MECAP libraries' serial collections acquired through Cairo Office. We can observe the following:

Serials subscriptions: LC and MECAP					
Country	Total no. of Titles	Total Serial Titles (LC)	Total Serial Titles (MECAP Participants)	MECAP Participants Only (commercial & exchange)	Total Titles LC Only (commercial)
Algeria	136	134	64	2	57
Bahrain	74	73	16	1	18
Egypt	534	503	218	31	247
Iraq	227	227	41	0	176
Jordan	185	176	48	9	130
Kuwait	137	132	25	5	72
Lebanon	172	166	84	6	73
Libya	43	37	21	6	22
Mauritania	39	39	13	0	14
Morocco	215	214	82	1	120
Oman	142	139	45	3	11
Qatar	63	63	16	0	7
Saudi Arabia	231	220	67	11	117
Sudan	254	246	118	8	56
Syria	92	89	38	3	32
Tunisia	135	129	78	6	19
Turkey	382	380	13	2	344
UAE	160	156	54	4	99
West Bank	80	80	9	0	24
Yemen	54	54	35	0	15
Other	46	44	12	2	32
Total	3,401	3,301	1,097	100	1,685



Egypt, Turkey, Sudan, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia, in that order, have the largest number of serial titles acquired for LC through Cairo Office while Egypt, Sudan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia, in that order, have the largest number of serial titles acquired for participants through Cairo Office.

Country	Total Serial Titles (LC)
Egypt	503
Turkey	380
Sudan	246
Iraq	227
Saudi Arabia	220

Country	Total Serial Titles (Participants)
Egypt	218
Sudan	118
Lebanon	84
Morocco	82
Tunisia	78

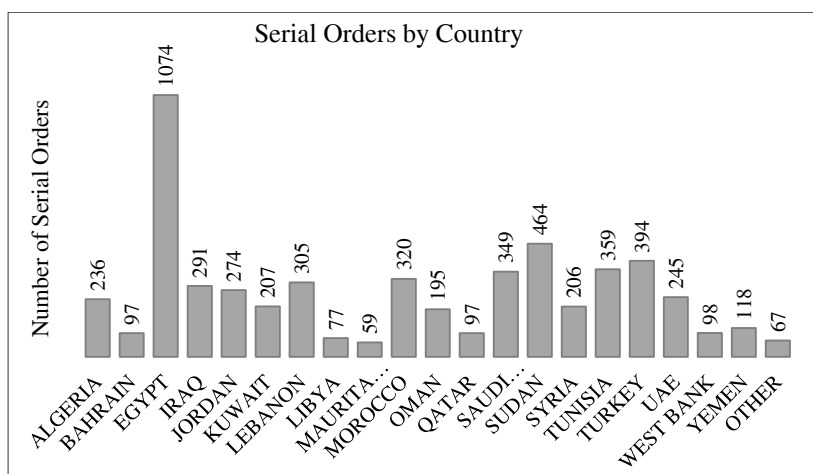
### B. Analysis by Titles Ordered

Here I will highlight the trends in terms of number of titles ordered. In compiling the data below, I will consider that if one title is ordered by 10 different libraries (Library of Congress and/or MECAP

participants), this will count as 10 orders from Egypt. So whereas the previous charts show the analysis of titles by country of publication, when orders are considered this will reflect the depth of demand for serial titles from a given country.

While Cairo Office maintains subscriptions to 3,401 individual serial titles, it maintains a total of 5,532 subscription orders placed on behalf of LC and MECAP participants.

Serial Orders by Country				
Country	Total Serial Orders		Country	Total Serial Orders
Algeria	236		Qatar	97
Bahrain	97		Saudi Arabia	349
Egypt	1,074		Sudan	464
Iraq	291		Syria	206
Jordan	274		Tunisia	359
Kuwait	207		Turkey	394
Lebanon	305		UAE	245
Libya	77		West Bank	98
Mauritania	59		Yemen	118
Morocco	320		Other	67
Oman	195		Total	5,532



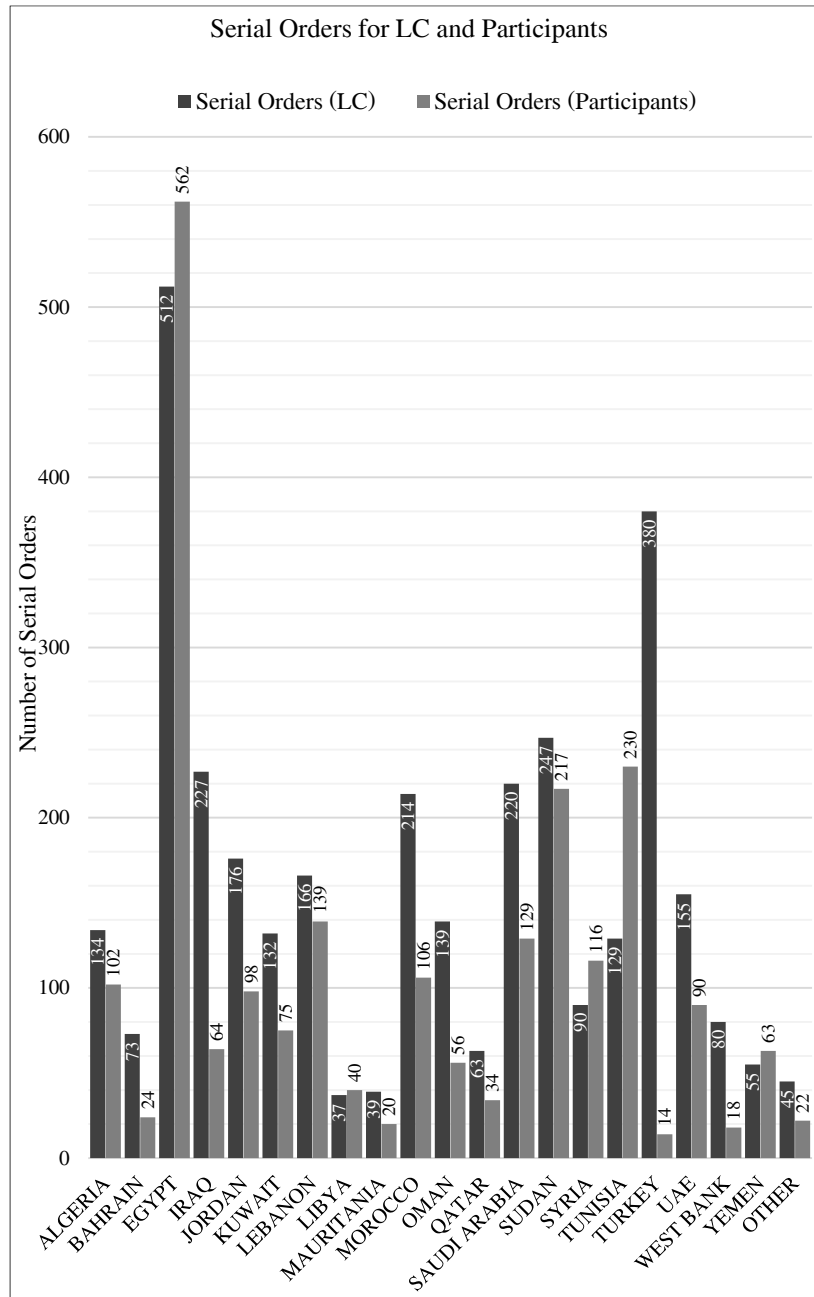
In the previous analysis of titles per country, we found that the largest number of serial titles were acquired from Egypt, Turkey,

Sudan, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq, in that order. However, when looking at ordered titles per country, we find that Egypt, Sudan, Turkey, Tunisia, and Saudi Arabia, in that order, have the largest number of orders placed by LC and MECAP participants through Cairo Office.

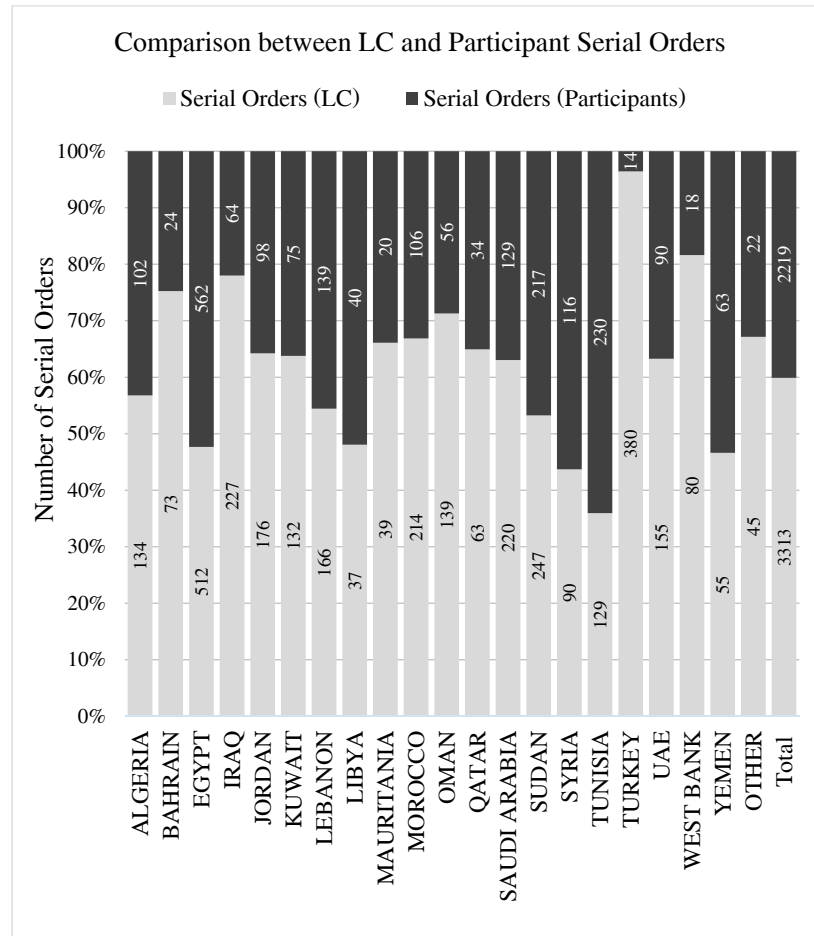
The total number of orders placed by Cairo Office on behalf of LC is 3,313, which is about 60 percent of our total orders, while the total number of orders placed on behalf of MECAP participants is 2,219, or about 40 percent of all orders.

Country	Total Serial Orders
Egypt	1,074
Sudan	464
Turkey	394
Tunisia	359
Saudi Arabia	349

Orders for LC and Participants by Country		
Country	Serial Orders (LC)	Serial Orders (Participants)
Algeria	134	102
Bahrain	73	24
Egypt	512	562
Iraq	227	64
Jordan	176	98
Kuwait	132	75
Lebanon	166	139
Libya	37	40
Mauritania	39	20
Morocco	214	106
Oman	139	56
Qatar	63	34
Saudi Arabia	220	129
Sudan	247	217
Syria	90	116
Tunisia	129	230
Turkey	380	14
UAE	155	90
West Bank	80	18
Yemen	55	63
Other	45	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,313</b>	<b>2,219</b>







From these charts we can notice the following:

- Egypt, Turkey, Sudan, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia have the largest number of orders placed through Cairo Office on behalf of LC.
- Egypt, Tunisia, Sudan, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia have the largest number of orders placed through Cairo Office on behalf of participants. This reflects the high demand for and interest in Egyptian and Tunisian serials by MECAP participants.

We can further note that from Turkey we have very few orders placed by participants in comparison with LC orders. On the other

hand, regarding Tunisia and Syria we can see that orders placed by participants are more than what is being placed for LC. In summary:

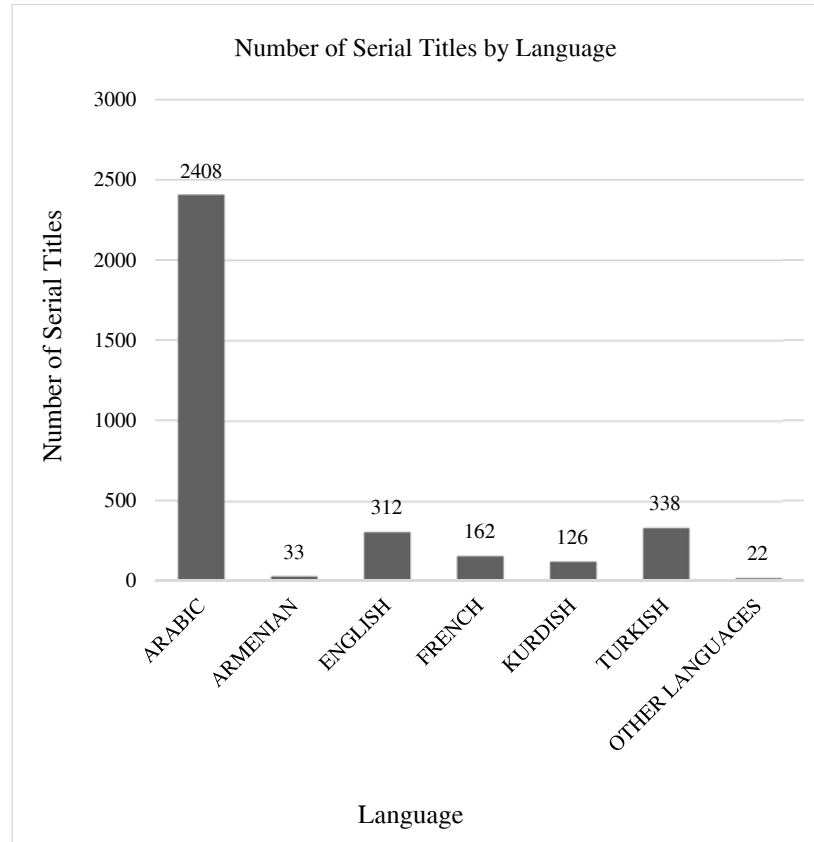
Serial Titles and Serial Orders: LC vs. Participants			
LC Serial Titles		Participant Serial Titles	
Country	Total Serial Titles (LC)	Country	Total Serial Titles (Participants)
Egypt	503	Egypt	218
Turkey	380	Sudan	118
Sudan	246	Lebanon	84
Iraq	227	Morocco	82
Saudi Arabia	220	Tunisia	78

LC Orders		Participant Orders	
Country	LC Orders	Country	Participants Orders
Egypt	512	Egypt	562
Turkey	380	Tunisia	230
Sudan	247	Sudan	217
Iraq	227	Lebanon	139
Saudi Arabia	220	Saudi Arabia	129

### C. Language of Publication

Cairo Office acquires serials in many languages but chiefly Arabic, Armenian, English, French, Kurdish, and Turkish. Other languages represented include 11 Syriac-language titles, 9 Amazigh titles, 1 Hebrew title, and 1 Spanish/Arabic title.

Number of Serial Titles by Language			
Languages	No. of Serial Titles	Languages	No. of Serial Titles
Arabic	2408	Kurdish	126
Armenian	33	Turkish	338
English	312	Other Languages	22
French	162	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3401</b>



As expected, almost 70 percent of Cairo Office serials collection is in the Arabic language, representing the primary language of acquisitions in the office, followed by Turkish. We can also see the notable amount of serials in French (from North Africa) and English.

What was not necessarily expected is the number of Turkish-language titles (acquired from one country, which is in second place) running ahead of the total number of English-language titles which are acquired from all the countries covered by Cairo Office. This of course reflects the heavy volume of serials publishing in Turkey. It is worth mentioning that 32 English-language titles are published in Turkey alone, which contributes to the publishing power of this country.

Languages by Country								
Country	ARA	ARM	ENG	FRE	KUR	TUR	OTHER	TOTAL
Algeria	84	0	1	48	0	0	3	136
Bahrain	61	0	13	0	0	0	0	74
Egypt	445	2	71	15	0	0	1	534
Iraq	105	0	2	0	110	0	10	227
Jordan	161	0	24	0	0	0	0	185
Kuwait	123	0	14	0	0	0	0	137
Lebanon	118	22	14	18	0	0	0	172
Libya	40	0	3	0	0	0	0	43
Mauritania	24	0	1	14	0	0	0	39
Morocco	180	0	2	27	0	0	6	215
Oman	127	0	15	0	0	0	0	142
Qatar	59	0	4	0	0	0	0	63
Saudi Arabia	188	0	43	0	0	0	0	231
Sudan	226	0	27	1	0	0	0	254
Syria	84	3	5	0	0	0	0	92
Tunisia	91	0	7	37	0	0	0	135
Turkey	2	5	32	0	13	328	2	382
UAE	145	0	15	0	0	0	0	160
West Bank	68	0	11	1	0	0	0	80
Yemen	51	0	3	0	0	0	0	54
Other	26	1	5	1	3	10	0	46
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,408</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>3,401</b>

From this table we can extract the following information:

Country	Number of Arabic Serials
Egypt	445
Sudan	226
Saudi Arabia	188
Morocco	180
Jordan	161

Country	Number of English Serials
Egypt	71
Saudi Arabia	43
Turkey	32
Sudan	27
Jordan	24
UAE	15

Country	Number of French Serials
Algeria	48
Tunisia	37
Morocco	27
Lebanon	18
Egypt	15
Mauritania	14

Egypt, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Jordan, in that order, have the largest number of serial titles in Arabic acquired from our region.

Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Sudan, Jordan, and UAE, in that order, have the largest number of serial titles in English acquired from Cairo Office's countries of coverage.

While Egypt is expected to have the largest number of English serial titles acquired through Cairo Office, it was interesting to find that the English serial titles acquired from the United Arab Emirates is less than what is being acquired from Saudi Arabia and Sudan.

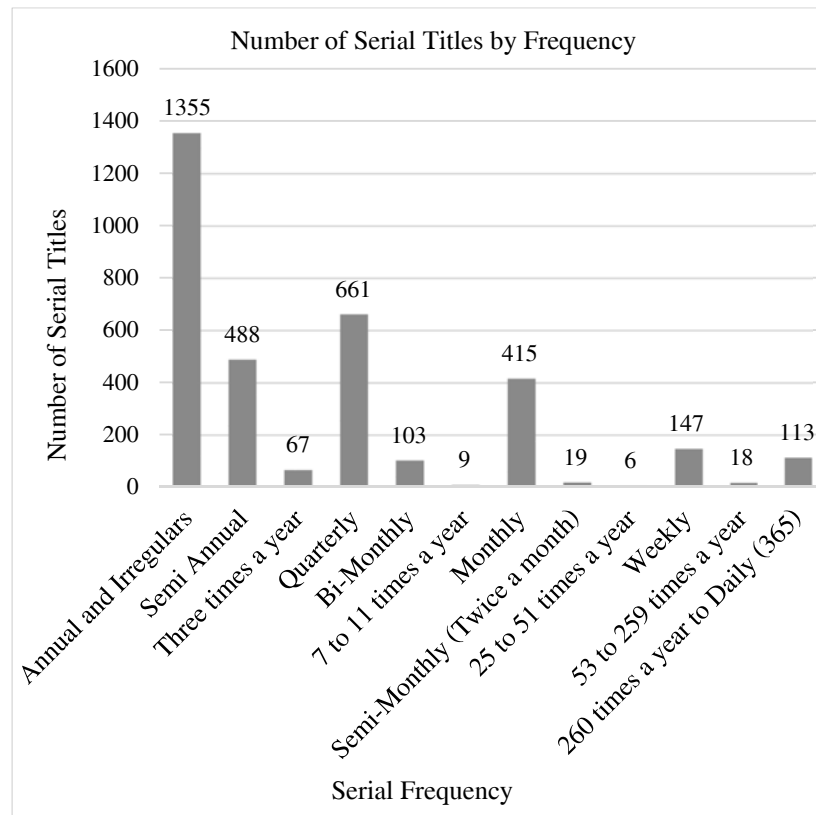
Naturally the largest number of French serials are being acquired from North Africa, followed by Lebanon and then Egypt.

#### D. Frequency

This is the fourth vantage point offering insight into the diversity of the serials collection. While most users look to publication frequency as a matter of when they should expect the next issue, we as serial librarians look to frequency as an indicator of the serial format and content. Usually, annual or irregular-frequency publications would be an institution's journal and statistical reports; publications with a frequency of 2 to 4 times per year are mostly academic journals;

monthlies to weeklies are general and social magazines. Anything with a higher rate of frequency is generally an official gazette or a newspaper title.

<b>Number of Serial Titles by Frequency</b>	
<b>Serial Frequency</b>	<b>Number of Serial Titles</b>
Annual and Irregulars	1355
Semi Annual	488
Three times a year	67
Quarterly	661
Bi-Monthly	103
7 to 11 times a year	9
Monthly	415
Semi-Monthly (Twice a month)	19
25 to 51 times a year	6
Weekly	147
53 to 259 times a year	18
260 times a year to Daily (365)	113
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,401</b>

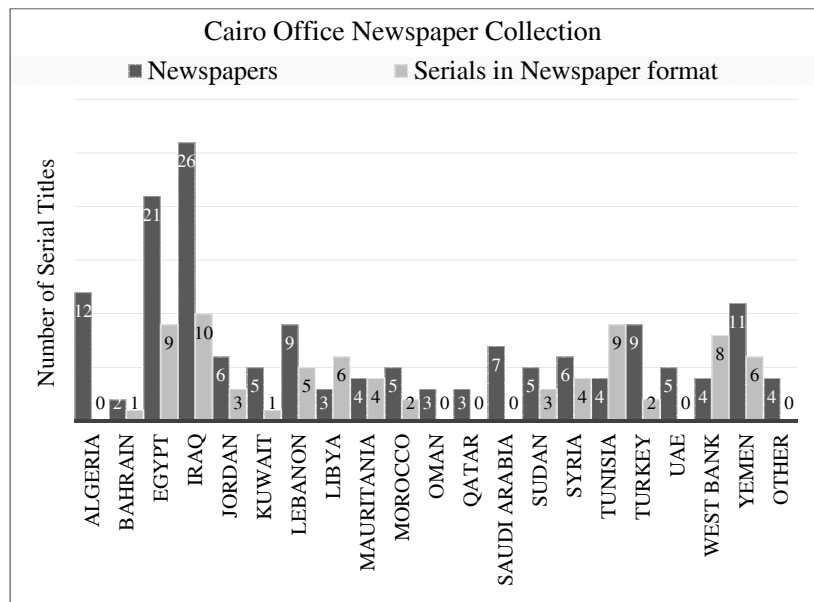
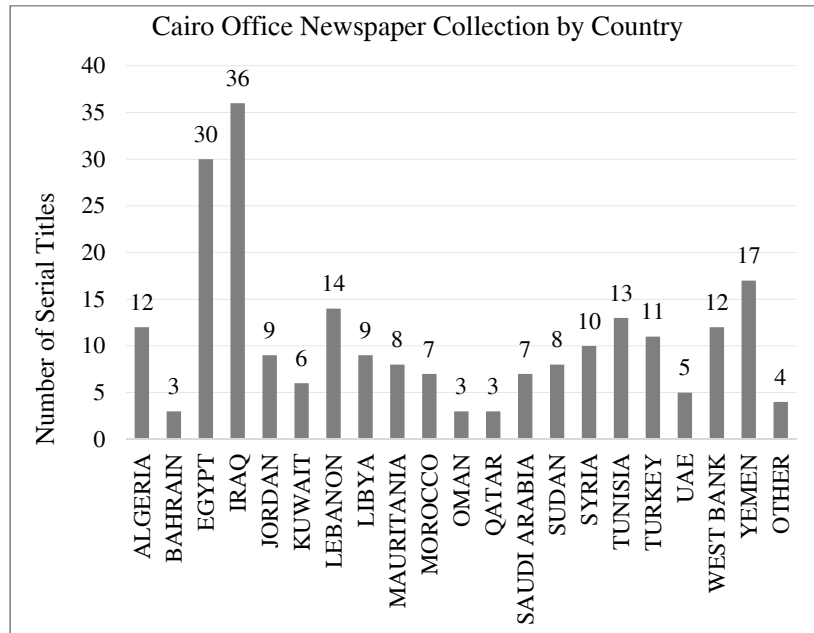


### Newspapers Acquired through Cairo Office

During the last two years I have received many requests for information about Cairo Office newspaper collection and what is being acquired for LC, and more specifically, what is not being acquired for MECAP participants. This is in order to shed light on what might be called the “National Collection of Foreign Newspapers.” The following chart gives a general breakdown of what we are acquiring. It is important to emphasize that “serials in newspaper format” are those serial titles which are not explicitly daily newspapers; rather they are magazines that, due to budget constraints on the publishers, are printed on newsprint to save money. As such, they may appear in tabloid-size format and require special handling as far as preservation and storage techniques go.

Cairo Office Newspapers and Serials in Newspaper Format Collection			
Country	Newspapers	Serials in Newspaper format	Grand Total
Algeria	12	0	12
Bahrain	2	1	3
Egypt	21	9	30
Iraq	26	10	36
Jordan	6	3	9
Kuwait	5	1	6
Lebanon	9	5	14
Libya	3	6	9
Mauritania	4	4	8
Morocco	5	2	7
Oman	3	0	3
Qatar	3	0	3
Saudi Arabia	7	0	7
Sudan	5	3	8
Syria	6	4	10
Tunisia	4	9	13
Turkey	9	2	11
UAE	5	0	5
West Bank	4	8	12
Yemen	11	6	17
Other	4	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>227</b>





Country	Grand Total
Iraq	36
Egypt	30
Yemen	17
Lebanon	14
Tunisia	13

From these charts we can see that Iraq, Egypt, Yemen (with some restrictions as we only have pictures to show that newspapers are still active), Lebanon, and Tunisia have the largest number of newspapers acquired through Cairo Office.

Newspapers by Language and Country							
Country	Language						Total
	ARA	ENG	FRE	KUR	TUR	ARM	
Algeria	6	0	6	--	--	--	12
Bahrain	1	1	--	--	--	--	2
Egypt	14	3	2	--	--	2	21
Iraq	15	1	--	10	--	--	26
Jordan	5	1	--	--	--	--	6
Kuwait	3	2	--	--	--	--	5
Lebanon	5	3	1	--	--	--	9
Libya	2	1	--	--	--	--	3
Mauritania	3	0	1	--	--	--	4
Morocco	3	0	2	--	--	--	5
Oman	2	1	--	--	--	--	3
Qatar	2	1	--	--	--	--	3
Saudi Arabia	6	1	--	--	--	--	7
Sudan	4	1	--	--	--	--	5
Syria	6	0	--	--	--	--	6
Tunisia	3	0	1	--	--	--	4
Turkey	0	0	--	--	7	2	9
UAE	4	1	--	--	--	--	5
West Bank	4	0	--	--	--	--	4
Yemen	9	2	--	--	--	--	11
Other	3	0	--	--	1	--	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>154</b>

Serials in Newspaper Format by Language and Country								
Country	Language							Total
	ARA	ENG	FRE	KUR	TUR	ARM	OTHER (LAD)	
Algeria	0	--	--	--	--	--	--	0
Bahrain	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	1
Egypt	9	--	--	--	--	--	--	9
Iraq	5	--	--	5	--	--	--	10
Jordan	3	--	--	--	--	--	--	3
Kuwait	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	1
Lebanon	5	--	--	--	--	--	--	5
Libya	6	--	--	--	--	--	--	6
Mauritania	1	--	3	--	--	--	--	4
Morocco	2	--	--	--	--	--	--	2
Oman	0	--	--	--	--	--	--	0
Qatar	0	--	--	--	--	--	--	0
Saudi Arabia	0	--	--	--	--	--	--	0
Sudan	3	--	--	--	--	--	--	3
Syria	3	--	--	--	--	1	--	4
Tunisia	8	--	1	--	--	--	--	9
Turkey	0	--	--	--	1	--	1	2
U	0	--	--	--	--	--	--	0
West Bank	8	--	--	--	--	--	--	8
Yemen	5	1	--	--	--	--	--	6
Other	0	--	--	--	--	--	--	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>73</b>

Country	Newspapers
Iraq	26
Egypt	21
Algeria	12
Yemen	11
Lebanon	9
Turkey	9

Country	Serials in Newspaper format
Iraq	10
Egypt	9
Tunisia	9
West Bank	8
Yemen	6
Libya	6
Lebanon	5

From the previous tables we can understand why Iraq has the largest number of newspapers or serials in newspaper format: that is because we are receiving about 10 serial titles in Kurdish, which makes a good addition to what we already receive in Arabic.

Although we are acquiring 12 newspaper titles from Algeria, it is not one of the countries of which we are acquiring the largest number of newspapers because it has no serials in newspaper format.

**Some interesting figures regarding the newspaper collection:**

The total number of newspapers collected is 227 titles, of which 154 titles are newspapers proper and 73 titles are serials in newspaper format.

The total number of titles acquired for LC is 220 titles, of which 148 titles are newspapers and 72 titles are serials in newspaper format.

The total number of titles acquired for MECAP participants is 62 titles, of which 45 titles are newspapers and 17 titles are serials in newspaper format, with a total of 87 orders placed for all participants.

The total number of titles sent to LC only (and not to MECAP participants) is 165 titles, of which 109 titles are newspapers and 56 titles are serials in newspaper format.

The total number of orders is 307, of which 220 are orders for LC and 87 are orders for participants: 211 orders for newspapers and 96 orders for serials in newspaper format.

There are 57 newspaper titles which we are acquiring for more than one participant, of which 40 titles are newspapers and 17 titles are serials in newspaper format.

**Conclusions and Suggestions**

In the absence of any known tools for tracking active serials coverage from the countries covered by Cairo Office, these data in this report can (and should) be used by MELA libraries as a benchmark against their own collections.

Sharing these figures, I would appreciate your suggestions and feedback for other indicators which could guide MELA libraries to understand what they already have and where they need to go in developing their collections. The data presented here might inform libraries as to which countries they might focus their acquisitions efforts on in order to further the notion of collecting serials to build a “National Collection of Middle East Serials” that would improve the

research capacity of libraries in serving their patrons. This data can furthermore flow into cooperative project proposals, such as the Middle East Materials Project.

## **Middle East Librarians in Digital Scholarship: Report from the MELA 2018 roundtable**

EVYN KROPF

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LIBRARY

WITH

HEATHER HUGHES, GUY BURAK, RYDER KOUBA,  
SEAN E. SWANICK<sup>1</sup>

### **Introduction**

The roundtable “Middle East Librarians in Digital Scholarship” was held over lunch the first day of the Middle East Librarians Association 2018 annual meeting in San Antonio, TX.

Organized by myself and Heather Hughes with support from program chair Dale J. Correa, the roundtable facilitated a conversation exploring the digital scholarship roles of library specialists in Middle Eastern & North African Studies / Islamic Studies (MENAS/IS), highlighting expertise and needs in this area within our MENAS/IS library specialist community, and bringing together a community of practice in the form of an interest group.

The roundtable opened with my welcome introducing working definitions for digital scholarship and digital humanities (DS/DH), an overview of trends in library engagement with digital scholarship, and an invitation for attendees to discuss their involvement in digital scholarship with one another. Heather and I then gave a detailed presentation of the aims and background motivating the conversation, including a discussion of the results of the MELA Survey on Digital Scholarship which we crafted and circulated during the summer of 2018.

Next came the central element of the roundtable, a conversation with colleagues already engaged in DS/DH: Guy Burak (New York University), Dale J. Correa (University of Texas at Austin), Heather Hughes (University of California Santa Barbara), Ryder Kouba (American University in Cairo), and Sean E. Swanick (Duke University). This conversation was structured around five prompts:

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<sup>1</sup> With special thanks to Dale J. Correa for her contributions as 2018 MELA Program Chair and as the fifth panelist on the roundtable.

- 1) What training / involvement in DS/DH have you had that has proved especially valuable?
- 2) What does the landscape of DS/DH work and needs look like in your user community?
- 3) How would you describe your role as librarian (or archivist or curator) in the DS/DH work in which you are currently involved? Do you collaborate with a dedicated DS/DH librarian colleague to deliver scholarship support? If so, what does your collaboration look like?
- 4) How has your training, expertise, and skill as a librarian (or archivist or curator) been valuable to the DS/DH work in which you are involved?
- 5) What crucial issues do you see that remain to be addressed for DS/DH in Middle Eastern & North African Studies / Islamic Studies and how can we as librarians (et al.) contribute to addressing these issues?

Following a period of questions and answers, we concluded the roundtable with a discussion of next steps for the formation of the MELA Digital Scholarship Interest Group (MELA DSIG) and invitation for participation.

The interest group and steering committee have since formed and are actively pursuing the work of supporting our community of colleagues working in MENA librarianship as we engage with DS/DH.<sup>2</sup>

This report documents the roundtable in the interest of inviting colleagues to engage more deeply as we continue to explore and pursue a better understanding of the role that we as specialists working in MENAS/IS librarianship play in digital scholarship work. The report details the background motivating the discussion—including relevant issues raised in the literature and in our community survey results—and offers a transcript of panelist responses. It concludes with reflection and next steps.

### **Background**

For purposes of these discussions, we have taken the following working definitions. For digital scholarship (DS), the definition of Abby Smith Rumsey:

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<sup>2</sup> For details see the committee page on the MELA website, [Digital Scholarship Interest Group](#).

“Digital scholarship is the use of digital evidence and method, digital authoring, digital publishing, digital curation and preservation, and digital use and reuse of scholarship.”<sup>3</sup>

And for digital humanities (DH), the definition of Kathleen Fitzpatrick:

“a nexus of fields within which scholars use computing technologies to investigate the kinds of questions that are traditional to the humanities, or...who ask traditional kinds of humanities-oriented questions about computing technologies.”<sup>4</sup>

A number of MENAS/IS library specialists have been intentionally involved in DS/DH work for some time, creating and maintaining metadata and digital catalogues, collaborating on digitization projects, negotiating access to image and text data sets, and partnering on a range of projects targeting particular research questions and digital methods. In fact, much of our routine work acquiring and maintaining digital collections and catalogues represents crucial infrastructural work for DS/DH whether recognized as such or not.

More recently, Middle East Studies Association (MESA) colleagues have been more intentional about organizing around digital scholarship. A thematic conversation was convened at the annual meeting in 2017 which culminated in a publication in the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (IJMES)<sup>5</sup> and a conversation around evaluating digital scholarship has culminated in published guidelines.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Abby Smith Rumsey, “New-Model Scholarly Communication: Road Map for Change.” *Scholarly Communication Institute* 9, SCI Reports 2004–2011: 157–188 ([Available online](#)).

<sup>4</sup> Kathleen Fitzpatrick, “Reporting from the Digital Humanities 2010 Conference,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, ProfHacker 13 July 2010 ([Available online](#)).

<sup>5</sup> “Roundtable: Digital Humanities in Middle East Studies” *IJMES* 50, 1 (2018): 103–139.

<sup>6</sup> See the [MESA Guidelines for Evaluating Digital Scholarship](#), published online in early 2018. While MELA colleagues were not involved in the roundtable write-up, we were invited to contribute comments and feedback on the guidelines once drafted. This is mainly thanks to our colleague Roberta (Robin) Dougherty’s active involvement in MESA.



As organizers, we felt that in this moment it would be appropriate for our library specialist community to be more intentional about the DS/DH work we are engaged in and could potentially be engaged in. To that end we convened the roundtable and pursued forming a supportive community of practice. We are hopeful that exploring and better articulating our roles and contributions could ultimately result in more fruitful collaborations and more vibrant and flourishing DS/DH work within MENAS/IS.

Libraries have played a crucial role in the development of what can be called DS/DH and have accelerated their engagement with the expansion and evolution of the field. A number of significant studies, reports, essays, and analyses have been prepared and published even in just the last 5–6 years and I will briefly review a few of the most salient findings and issues raised, many of which have been expertly surveyed by Alix Keener in her 2015 publication “The Arrival Fallacy: Collaborative Research Relationships in the Digital Humanities.”<sup>7</sup>

#### *Librarians as DS/DH Collaborators and Partners*

First, librarians are valuable DS/DH collaborators, not simply supporters or service providers. A Center for Institutional Cooperation (CIC) report notes that some of the best digital work is conducted when librarians are on the project team (along with technologists, students, etc.).<sup>8</sup> Librarians bring valuable knowledge of source material, research methods, and data organization and management, and their disciplinary expertise and technical expertise (coding, markup languages) is still further added value.<sup>9</sup>

Even so, libraries themselves are unsure about their DS/DH engagement given the growing community of practitioners and “ever-expanding range of techniques and methods.”<sup>10</sup> This has played out in particular uncertainty around the service and support model, and the role of service provider. What services are useful? From dedicated DS/DH librarians, subject liaisons, both? And what of the tensions

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<sup>7</sup> Alix Keener, “The Arrival Fallacy: Collaborative Research Relationships in the Digital Humanities,” *digital humanities quarterly* 9, 2 (2015) ([Available online](#)).

<sup>8</sup> Pp. 5 and 7 in CIC DIGITAL HUMANITIES SUMMIT REPORT: Executive Summary (2012) ([Available online](#)).

<sup>9</sup> Keener 2015, paragraphs 27–30.

<sup>10</sup> Stewart Varner and Patricia Hswe, “Special Report: Digital Humanities in Libraries,” *American Libraries* (January 4, 2016) ([Available online](#)).

around service versus servitude and whether “whether librarians have equal status with faculty in fostering digital humanities scholarship”?<sup>11</sup>

Miriam Posner has stated: “Many of the problems we have faced ‘supporting’ digital humanities work may stem from the fact that digital humanities projects in general do not need supporters—they need collaborators. Libraries need to provide infrastructure (access to digitization tools and servers, for example) to support digital humanities work, but they need thoughtful, skilled, knowledgeable humanists to actually work on it.”<sup>12</sup>

Trevor Muñoz takes this engagement a bit further, advocating for helping librarians lead their own DS/DH initiatives and projects.<sup>13</sup> He contends that librarians’ work needs to be seen as intellectual labor and librarians’ efforts as incubators for technology transfer to the university community at large.<sup>14</sup> This is a compelling model but may not be politically feasible at many institutions.

A middle way is a spectrum of collection work, instruction work, and consultation work that can naturally lead to longer term collaborations based on research interests and expertise.<sup>15</sup>

Varner and Hswe have similarly contended that “it may be more productive—and more honest—to position the library as research partner that can explore new solutions with researchers rather than as a service provider that either has what a researcher is looking for or doesn’t.”<sup>16</sup>

### *Engagement and Training*

Should our primary role then be full-fledged project collaborator and researcher partner? If so, what does that look like?

Alix Keener has argued that in order to successfully accomplish such collaboration, libraries need to address issues such as training, re-skilling, and better coordinated outreach to academic

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<sup>11</sup> Keener 2015, paragraph 11.

<sup>12</sup> Pp. 45–46 in Miriam Posner, “No half measures: Overcoming common challenges to doing digital humanities in the library.” *Journal of Library Administration* 53, 1 (2013): 43–52.

<sup>13</sup> Trevor Muñoz, “Digital humanities in the library isn’t a service,” 19 August 2012 ([Available online](#)).

<sup>14</sup> See synthesis in Posner 2013, p. 45.

<sup>15</sup> Keener 2015, paragraph 39.

<sup>16</sup> Varner and Hswe 2016.

departments.<sup>17</sup> Community engagement goes hand in hand with building capacity for DS/DH and as librarians we must remain engaged with our researchers, know the projects of interest to them, know the scholarship, and be familiar with methods and techniques.

As for our MENAS/IS community, there would seem to be tremendous opportunities for engagement and collaboration with our non-librarian colleagues around this work.

The recently published guidelines suggest that these colleagues value surfacing collections digitally through digital surrogates/facsimiles and the scholarly work of catalogues, the value of digital editions, and the potential of making advances with OCR for the relevant languages of our field, particularly those utilizing the Arabic script.<sup>18</sup>

However, do we see fruitful connections and collaborations? Where we are already engaged, is that engagement recognized and with it the potential of librarians as partners in DS/DH? If not, why not? Are there barriers to involvement/recognition? And what does DS/DH involvement currently look like for our librarian community now? To get a better sense of where our community stands with these issues, we decided to put out a survey that could inform the roundtable discussion.

### **MELA Survey on Digital Scholarship**

Distributed under the title MELA Survey on Digital Scholarship,<sup>19</sup> the survey was fairly brief (requiring 10–15 minutes) and addressed involvement and training in DS/DH for colleagues working in Middle East librarianship—that is, specialists working in librarianship supporting Middle Eastern and North African Studies broadly defined. The purpose was to capture data on our community's DS/DH engagement and the current state of our emerging and evolving DS/DH roles.

We distributed the survey as a Google Form via the listservs MELANET-L, mideastcat-l, and LIS-MIDDLE-EAST. The survey remained open from 17 July to 10 August 2018 and we received 27 valid responses.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Keener 2015, paragraph 41.

<sup>18</sup> See once again [MESA Guidelines for Evaluating Digital Scholarship](#).

<sup>19</sup> For a detailed visual presentation of survey results, see the slides posted on the [MELA Digital Scholarship Interest Group page](#).

<sup>20</sup> One response fell out of scope and was therefore excluded.

19 of these responses came from individuals who indicated that they were involved in MELA. This is actually approaching a quarter of our membership (which fluctuates between 80–90), and about one third of our recent membership in attendance at MELA annual meetings (an average of 58 for 2015–2017). On the whole, not a fully representative sample but certainly significant.

The survey opened with demographic information. We invited each respondent to freely enter their job title, to select from a range of options characterizing their institution, to freely name the country in which their institution was located, and to indicate whether or not they were involved with MELA, MELCom International, MELCOM UK, and/or another organization.

In analyzing and coding the data, we identified several roles, with close to half of respondents in a liaison library role, a couple of data services librarians, and a few other categories (slide 4). The vast majority of respondents indicated that they worked in academic libraries, with a fairly even split between public and private academic libraries (slide 5). Roughly half of respondents indicated that they were located in the United States, but we also had respondents from Europe and the Middle East (slide 6).

As for professional affiliation, roughly 70% of respondents indicated that they were involved in MELA and roughly half with MELCom International. Many respondents were active in more than one organization (slide 7).

Regarding experience working on DS/DH projects, roughly half of respondents had served as a member of a project team while one third had devised and led a project. 30% had advised or consulted on a project but were not formally recognized as members of the project team (slide 8). Further, almost two-thirds of respondents indicated that they were currently involved in a DS/DH project (slide 9) and most of those provided a description of the project and their role (slide 10). These ranged from data curation, analysis, and visualization to advising on projects, training students to do usability testing, cataloguing, and digitization projects.

Together, this reinforces the anecdotal notion that a number of MENAS/IS librarians possess DS/DH expertise, are doing DS/DH work, and are partnering on and supporting this work, though often without recognition. It is also significant that a third of respondents had experience initiating and steering projects.

Respondents were also polled regarding whether or not MENAS/IS scholars on their campuses were actively involved in or

considering DS/DH projects. 55% indicated that they were aware of such activity among their local scholarly communities (slide 11). When invited to describe this involvement, responses included textual analysis of late 20<sup>th</sup>-century Arabic newspapers, a project on the visual anthropology of Beirut, a digital archive (with transcriptions) of Persian documents, work with the Open Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus (ORACC), text markup work with the Digital Syriac Corpus, a nascent Judeo-Arabic texts mapping/transcription project, a database of pre-modern scientific Islamic manuscripts, and a digital image archive for institution-held collection items (slide 12).

In light of this activity, it was then not surprising that nearly two-thirds of respondents indicated that they were expected to support DS/DH work in their current librarian role, whether written into the job description or made apparent by supervisors (slide 13).

This points to evolving roles for liaison librarians, and expectations for MENAS/IS librarians to hold a wide range of expertise. Interestingly, not all who indicated that supporting DS/DH work was an expectation also indicated that they were currently involved in a project, and some who were currently involved in a project did not indicate that supporting DS/DH work was an expectation of their current role.

While the majority of respondents indicated that they are expected to support digital scholarship work in their current librarian role, it turns out that a significant number of respondents are employed in libraries where DS/DH work is supported by dedicated functional specialists or even entire centers (for Digital Scholarship or for Digital Humanities) with programming and services. Respondents were asked to select from a slate of roles to indicate which their library had (slide 14). The most prevalent of these roles was “Metadata Librarian” but “Digital Scholarship Librarian” and “Digital Humanities Librarian” were also prevalent, as was “Digital Preservation Librarian.” Beyond Center for Digital Humanities or Digital Scholarship a couple of respondents indicated that their libraries had programming (e.g., lecture series, symposia—without an associated dedicated space) or services that essentially accomplish this support work but under a different name (like ScholarSpace or Scholars Lab). One respondent mentioned an initiative that is housed in the library but staffed by folks from other units on campus (Humanities Collaboratory). One respondent mentioned a Data Services Librarian role as well (slide 15).

This clearly suggests an investment in supporting DS/DH on the part of these libraries, particularly where MENAS/IS colleagues (and presumably other subject specialists/liaisons) are also expected to support DS/DH work.

Of interest practically then is the coordination and collaboration that may or may not take place between the dedicated functional specialists and centers and the subject specialists.

Respondents whose libraries had any of the listed DS/DH support positions and/or centers were invited to describe the extent to which they collaborate. This was a free text response which we coded and sorted according to levels of collaboration.

Seven respondents indicated that they collaborate closely/ extensively (slide 16). Service models included:

- An in-library DH group “which meets monthly and is made up of librarians and/or project heads working with DH tools and those who have an interest in fostering developments in DH in the Library.”
- Subject specialist collaborations with functional specialists/center around “Team teaching/devising assignments, creation of digital collections, including metadata work...integration of digital scholarship center with area studies activities including outreach to K–12 and into tours for new grad students and other groups.”
- Dedicated functional specialists assigned to each area collection.

Ten respondents indicated that they collaborate on a project basis /ad-hoc basis, particularly where projects require MENAS/IS expertise (slide 17).

Three respondents indicated that they collaborate only minimally (slide 18). In one case, the respondent hoped for better collaboration when dedicated DS/DH expertise was brought on/hired. In another case, functional specialists did not seem to take the initiative on coordination when researchers from the MENA specialist’s area consulted on a project.

Respondents were also polled on the various kinds of training that they had received to carry out this work.

Regarding training which respondents had received in DS/DH methods & concepts, almost two-thirds had received at least some sort of training (slide 19 and slide 20). Several had received training at

their institution; others had attended any of several institutes such as Digital Humanities Summer Institute (DHSI) or a DHSI network institute, NEH Institute for Advanced Topics in the Digital Humanities, ARL Digital Scholarship Institute, and Humanities Intensive Learning & Teaching (HILT). A few indicated that they had received some DS/DH training in their graduate courses or even their undergraduate training.

As for training that respondents had received in supporting DS/DH as a librarian, however, almost the same number (16 of 27) indicated that they had received no such training (slide 21). Only one respondent had attended the ARL Digital Scholarship Institute. Only 37% had received some form of training (formal or informal, e.g., reading group) at their institution.

When asked if they felt that they had received adequate specialist training in supporting DS/DH as a MENA librarian, only 3 out of 27 respondents indicated that they had received adequate training (slide 22). Clearly our community is in need of greater support in this area.

Respondents were asked to identify DS/DH training that they would recommend to colleagues and they mentioned DHSI and network institutes, HILT, NEH Institute for Advanced Topics, Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory (HASTAC), and specialized workshops (slide 23).<sup>21</sup>

Respondents were also invited to indicate any of several areas in which they would appreciate additional training, and they responded with great enthusiasm around all the areas mentioned (slide 24). Greatest interest was in Arabic OCR, then computational methods (text mining, etc.) and introductions to particular digital tools, followed closely by digital preservation and advanced work with particular digital tools. Respondents also indicated interest in metadata training. A couple of respondents mentioned coding and datasets.

The overwhelming majority of respondents (85%) indicated that they would be interested in tailored DS/DH training for MENA librarians (slide 25).

Finally, respondents were polled on whether or not they had intentions or desire to attend the international conference “Whither Islamicate Digital Humanities?” slated for 13–15 December 2018 in

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<sup>21</sup> Such as those Elias Muhanna has organized as part of the Digital Islamic Humanities Project at Brown and which Maxim Romanov has organized as part of his work at Leipzig and on projects related to the Open Islamicate Texts Initiative (OpenITI).

Amsterdam (slide 26). Only two indicated that they had plans to attend and the majority indicated that they had no plans but wished that they could attend. Nine indicated that they might attend.

Overall, the survey results confirm that a significant number of colleagues within our MENAS/IS librarian community are actively engaged in DS/DH work at various levels—partnering on and even leading projects—and are expected to conduct this work within our routine duties. Nevertheless, we would benefit from additional training—particularly training tailored to issues specific to MENAS/IS DS/DH (such as Arabic OCR and relevant computational methods) and training on enhanced collaboration with functional specialists and other DS/DH partners.

### **Conversation with Panelists**

The roundtable panel conversation shed further light on our librarian community's engagement with DS/DH by way of insights into the experiences of several colleagues who are involved in this work.

Once again, our distinguished panelists were: Guy Burak (Librarian for Middle Eastern, Islamic, & Jewish Studies, New York University), Dale J. Correa (Middle Eastern Studies Librarian & History Coordinator, University of Texas at Austin), Heather Hughes (Librarian for Middle Eastern Studies & Comparative Literature, University of California Santa Barbara), Ryder Kouba (Digital Collections Archivist, American University in Cairo), and Sean E. Swanick (Librarian for Middle East & Islamic Studies, Duke University).

All five panelists had considerable insights to share. What follows is a transcript of responses from four of the five panelists in their own words.<sup>22</sup>

*1) What training / involvement in DS/DH have you had that has proved especially valuable?*

Guy Burak: My first engagement with digital scholarship was in my dissertation research (before it was known as DH). Since then, I attended several DH workshops and conferences. At NYU, the Social Sciences and Humanities Department organized training sessions on various digital tools, as part of a study project called "Downtown

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<sup>22</sup> One panelist, Dale J. Correa, was not able to contribute her responses for this writing owing to other obligations.



Digital” (modeled after a similar project at Columbia). But my main training in DH came from my work with metadata as a cataloger. Since structuring data is at the core of many digital projects, this experience has been extremely useful. Finally, I have been involved in several DH projects at NYU and beyond.

Heather Hughes: I was fortunate to have the opportunity to attend the ARL Digital Scholarship Institute in Winter of 2018, and this was a great opportunity to learn about Digital Scholarship in general, and also learn about tools and techniques for doing ds. We had a few keynote speakers talking about their work in ds, ways to teach and evaluate ds, and hands-on sessions related to learning about tools in visualization, mapping, text analysis and text encoding. The institute is really geared to people at all levels and different positions, and acknowledging that some people might be using these tools more directly and some people might be using their knowledge more to refer researchers to other librarians. So while there were a number of digital scholarship librarians, there were also a few of us area studies librarians, and a number of music librarians in our cohort. I don’t think the training necessarily offers enough opportunity to get very proficient in every tool, but it would give you a sense of what is possible and out there. All the texts used in teaching exercises were English, so it would be nice to have training with more area studies orientation.

Ryder Kouba: My main training was as part of a cohort from AMICAL (an association of American-style universities abroad) attending the Digital Humanities Summer Institute at the University of Victoria in Canada. The course instructors were excellent, particularly since everything was hands-on with plenty of opportunities to either fine-tune an existing project or just explore. I also attended the Digital Humanities Institute in Beirut, which was also very good, but smaller in scope (three days vs. two weeks). Additionally, websites like Programming Historian and StackOverflow have been invaluable in helping get started (especially ProgHist) with software (QGIS in my case).

Sean E. Swanick: I’ve been fortunate to attend two formal training sessions. In summer of 2013 I attended a Digital Humanities Summer Institute week-long program on Text Editing Initiative (TEI). The summer institute sees some 200–400 computer experts and enthusiasts

train and exchange ideas at the University of Victoria, in British Columbia. I also attended a two-day workshop on coding. Since participating in those programs, I've spent time reading articles, meeting with DH colleagues at Duke, and trying to keep abreast of new developments.

*2) What does the landscape of DS/DH work and needs look like in your user community?*

Guy Burak: At NYU, there are several digitization projects led by the Libraries. Most of the faculty and graduate students at NYU have shown varying degrees of interest, but very few have been seriously involved in digital projects. One of our graduate students is very active in the Ajam Media Collective digital archive. And it is also worth mentioning Robert McChesney's initiative, The Afghanistan Digital Library. At the Libraries, there is a growing interest in DH. NYU Libraries has several digital scholarship librarians, covering a wide range of tools and practices.

Heather Hughes: We definitely have scholars active in dh/ds, who have digital archives or data, and I think digital preservation is going to be a need for sure. Outdated technology and Arabic script doesn't age well! I also know that some graduate students are interested in dh, but haven't really gotten much in the way of requests to help.

Ryder Kouba: In Egypt I believe AUC is leading the charge; we held a DH introduction workshop late last year, had Dr. Will Hanley who studies Egypt provide a digital humanities workshop and lectures, and in two weeks will be hosting a QGIS/mapping workshop with attendees from cultural and educational institutes in Cairo and Alexandria. In the broader Middle East it seems NYU-AD and AUB are the standard bearers, and staff members have attended events hosted by those institutions. Having said that, Egypt and the Middle East are popular subjects all over the world, so I think MELA and MESA could play a key role in tying geographically disparate groups together; for example, I don't have a great idea what is happening at UCLA but MELA/MESA conferences/blogs/listservs could help bridge that gap.

Sean E. Swanick: Currently there are three DH-related projects at Duke University which relate to the Middle East and Islamic Studies.

I am a co-director for one project, and play a minimal role in two others. With Adam Mestyan (Duke University) and Kathryn Schwartz (University of Massachusetts, Amherst) we are working on a project called “An Egyptian Sheikh’s Literary World—Digitally Reconstructing Islamic Print Culture Through Mustafa Salamah al-Najjari’s Book Collection.” This project is recreating the personal library of this 19<sup>th</sup>-century Cairene Sheikh. The other two projects at Duke are: “Mapping of Istanbul” and “Muslim Voices.” The first, led by Prof. Timur Kuran, an economics historian of the Middle East with a specific focus on Istanbul and Turkey more broadly, is striving to produce the authoritative digital map of Istanbul from the early Ottoman period up to the early Republican period. Duke has a map librarian and two DH librarians working on coding involved in the project. Timur also has a number of graduate students helping. And the other project, “Muslim Voices,” is aiming to interview a cross-section of Muslim Americans, particularly women, about their roles in society. It is intended to be an ethnographic study but is in its nascent stage of planning.

I often have requests from students for data about the Middle East. These students are mostly are unaware of what they can do with the data besides an analysis and by this I mean creating visualizations; Duke is a leader in their visualization services with 3–4 dedicated staff to train people on different programs. Duke also runs a code-a-thon every year which hosts some 100 or so high school students from Carolina in coding.

*3) How would you describe your role as librarian (or archivist or curator) in the DS/DH work in which you are currently involved? Do you collaborate with a dedicated DS/DH librarian colleague to deliver scholarship support? If so, what does your collaboration look like?*

Guy Burak: My main contribution as a Middle East Studies Librarian is to make sure that all the parties involved are on the same page and to inform the departments I work with on available tools and practices. Within the Libraries, I think it is important to highlight the unique challenges that non-Roman scripts materials pose (such as OCR for Arabic typefaces and the lack of reliable textual corpora and data). I have directed several users to discuss their project with the DH librarian. In addition, I organized a workshop for our graduate students

at the Middle East and Islamic Studies Department with other librarians who have DH expertise.

Heather Hughes: It's definitely expected that I would support dh/ds projects of my faculty and students, and collaborate with relevant librarians. We don't currently have dedicated dh or digital scholarship librarians, so I feel that there is not as much action around this as I would like. Recently, a comparative literature professor asked for an instruction session to incorporate open access and digitization, so teaching can be another component of dh work.

Ryder Kouba: I view my role as support (e.g., here are the maps you wanted to georeference) in kind of boring technical matters as well as a big picture person due to my knowledge of collections at AUC and interest in DH. I imagine myself telling faculty "Well, AUC did this awesome project and the archives can provide similar types of materials," so that could be a productive avenue. Other librarians (like our DH Librarians) are obviously more hands-on with researchers. This year is especially busy with the AUC centennial, so it's a fine line between supporting projects and knowing what I am actually able to do.

Sean E. Swanick: I see my role most as a liaison or interlocutor between faculty and DH librarians. While I appreciate requests to be involved, I don't have the time necessary to devote to more than one of these projects. With the Najjari project, I am a full participant working on finding and annotating the books of Najjari's personal collection as well as the grant application procedure. I was also a full-participant in another project on the free-verse Pakistani poet Noon Meem Rashid project until I left McGill. I do collaborate with my DH colleagues, particularly for questions regarding language or issues with collections. While I'm an advocate for the work being completed, and will gladly write recommendation letters for funding, etc., I do have other responsibilities which also occupy quite a bit of time. Also, the other faculty have designed their projects with other team members and approached me when they needed some specific information. While it's terrific they are making use of the library and its resources, I'm also happy to contribute when required.

4) *How has your training, expertise and skill as a librarian (or archivist or curator) been valuable to the DS/DH work in which you are involved?*

Guy Burak: As I said, my familiarity with available resources, with structuring data and my experience in managing relatively large projects has been instrumental to digital projects I have been involved in both at NYU and beyond.

Heather Hughes: Definitely taking coursework in digitization and digital preservation was very helpful, as was work experience as a scanner in HRC; working in special collections (Hoover Archives) has been very helpful. Bringing librarian expertise to ds/dh (I think) means thinking about the sustainability of a project, long-term preservation, the discoverability and access, and also citation, ethics, and crediting labor. Training as an archivist and awareness of original order is also important in evaluating digital collections.

Ryder Kouba: Having digitization and metadata creation be part of my daily job has definitely helped with workflow aspects of DH projects; additionally my interest in digital preservation has forced me to think like an archivist about how projects will be maintained (or at least preserved in some manner) for future researchers. As mentioned above I also have a pretty good idea of what AUC has available for researchers to use. A weakness from my training is right now, with my limited DH experience I feel I view the projects as more of giant digitization projects with more complicated metadata, which is not the most productive viewpoint possible.

Sean E. Swanick: This is a complex question given the changing standards in Library Schools in North America. As someone still relatively young in the field, DH was not something offered or really discussed when I graduated from Library school in 2009. However, since becoming a professional I've worked to maintain currency and discover new avenues of research. With that said, I was fortunate to have support from McGill to provide me with some funding and time to develop these skills. These skills have paid dividends as I've been invited to participate in a few projects. At the practical level, I cannot admit that I'm particularly gifted with in-depth work for DH projects. I have taken courses but I would never confess to being proficient or even gifted with, for example, coding.

5) *What crucial issues do you see that remain to be addressed for DS/DH in Middle Eastern & North African Studies/Islamic Studies and how can we as librarians (et al.) contribute to addressing these issues?*

Guy Burak: In general, I would like to see a normalization of the DH trend. Digital tools and practices have been around for decades in libraries and the academia more broadly, so I think it is important to distinguish between the use of digital tools and the current academic trend of DH. But for this to happen a growing familiarity with the opportunities and challenges of the digital world is necessary. In Middle East Studies, the question of OCR literacy seems very important to me. Many users assume that the OCR accuracy in Arabic/Persian/Urdu scripts matches the accuracy of OCR in, say, Roman-script languages. At this point, this is of course not the case. So it is important to understand the accuracy rates, because they bear on the types of studies one can do. The other important issue is the relative lack of reliable corpora, especially of non-canonical works. This means that DH projects often need to generate their own corpora, which may considerably complicate the project. Librarians can play a major role in increasing the familiarity with digital tools and enhance the OCR literacy of users. In addition, they can work independently and with vendors to curate and generate reliable textual corpora and data from and about the Middle East and the Islamic world more generally.

Heather Hughes: How to balance and maintain expertise in the different areas of our jobs can be an issue. It would be great to see sustainable support for cataloging and metadata work that is not precarious and underpaid, and that is not only available at elite Ivy League institutions, as well as a cultural shift in academia that favors collaboration. Unionization of academic and library workers is important to fight precarious positions in dh, I've seen some librarians write conditions into grants that don't allow for project labor which is great. I think it would be really great if there was training geared towards MENA sources as well.

Ryder Kouba: A big issue here in Egypt is access to resources that may be useful from archives and libraries; I don't think much can be done about that but it is important. I also think librarians and archivists

can play a key role in sharing projects to students and faculty when talking about resources and perhaps spark an interest from others.

Sean E. Swanick: There are a number of avenues in which to respond. Technology for our fields hasn't developed at the same pace as others for a variety of reasons, e.g., OCR or even data mining. But I see time as the major issue. How to balance between all of the different demands, including some unrealistic ones? This is something I've greatly struggled with and told the leads of the projects I've been involved with that I'm happy to participate but this will not be my top priority. One of the most enjoyable aspects of librarianship is the day-to-day diversity of work, questions, priorities, etc. It's difficult to commit, for example, 4 hours every Thursday to one particular project.

### **Reflections and Next Steps**

Our Middle East Librarians in Digital Scholarship roundtable has demonstrated that as library specialists in Middle Eastern & North African Studies/Islamic Studies, we are well-positioned to contribute valuable expertise to the emerging and established DS/DH work being conducted within MENAS/IS. In fact, we are already contributing: creating and maintaining structured bibliographic data and digital collections at significant scale, negotiating access to data sets, liaising to bring together the needed expertise around a project, advising on preservation, access and workflow issues, pressing for advances in technologies such as Arabic OCR, offering guidance on particular tools and methods, and initiating and leading projects.

This work emerges out of our broader collection work (curation, cataloguing, preservation, etc.), instruction work, consultation work, liaison work, language expertise, subject expertise, and research interests as well as our engagement with research partners, emerging scholarship, and digital methods and techniques.

Many in our community are already heavily involved in this work with expectations from our administrators that we continue. Others are only beginning their involvement and will benefit from training in methods and approaches. In many cases, we also have service collaborations with functional specialist colleagues and other DS/DH support centers to navigate. And all of us are negotiating the great variety of our challenging work in the midst of demands on time and attention.

Fortunately, within the newly formed MELA Digital Scholarship Interest Group<sup>23</sup> we have a supportive community in which to explore and better express our roles, contributions, and engagement within MENAS/IS DS/DH work. The steering committee looks forward to organizing future conversations, trainings, and resources. Hopefully our efforts will lead to more fruitful collaborations and more vibrant digital scholarship within Middle Eastern & North African Studies/ Islamic Studies.

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<sup>23</sup> Again see the committee page on the MELA site, [Digital Scholarship Interest Group](#).



## **Early Arabic Printing in Europe: A Selection of Books (1514–1694)**

MARIETTE ATALLAH  
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

### **Introduction**

Throughout the Bronze Age and well into the Iron Age, Sumerians in southern Mesopotamia made clay tablets “from the sedimentary earth deposited on the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates”<sup>1</sup> a medium of writing in cuneiform. In addition, papyrus served as a writing medium for the Egyptians. Papyrus plants were cut into narrow strips and placed together to form two layers, one horizontal and the other vertical.<sup>2</sup> The cells of papyrus fibers were crushed and squeezed under pressure extracting a glue-like substance, which helped the fibers of the two layers to stick together. Papyrus gradually disappeared from use and was replaced by parchment. Then in the first century CE, the Chinese invented the art of manufacturing paper from the macerated fibers of vegetal plants, monopolized this manufacturing process, and kept it secret.

The process was transmitted to the Arabs around the middle of the eighth century CE. The story goes that during the Muslim conquest of Transoxiana, between the seventh and eighth centuries, the representative of the Abbasids in Khorasan, Persia, commissioned the governor of Samarkand to subdue a Turkic tribe. This tribe had an alliance with the Chinese and other tribes, bringing a large segment of the Turkestan region under Chinese hegemony. A fierce battle

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The online exhibition of this paper, including a map and a timeline, can be accessed at the following link:

<http://online-exhibit.aub.edu.lb/exhibits/show/early-arabic-printing>

<sup>1</sup> Abdul Ahad Hannawi, “The Role of the Arabs in the Introduction of Paper into Europe,” *MELA Notes* 85 (2012): 14-29.

<sup>2</sup> Dard Hunter, *Papermaking: the history and technique of an ancient craft* (New York: Dover, 1978), 22.

resulted; the Chinese and their allies were defeated. Chinese papermakers were captured and brought back to Samarkand.

For some authors this explains how paper spread among Arabs. However, one of the reasons this story is probably false is that papermakers were only mentioned in one Arab source three centuries after it happened. Furthermore, in a Chinese source, one of the prisoners captured and returned to his homeland mentions only “weavers, painters, goldsmiths and silversmiths among the prisoner taken.”<sup>3</sup> Besides, in the chapter “The Specialties of Different Lands” in a work by Tha‘alibi (961–1038), the author states that the specialties of Samarkand include paper and that the usage of papyrus and parchment was discontinued because paper was easy to handle and more supple.<sup>4</sup>

In any case, the Abbasids who then established themselves in southern Spain introduced the art of paper making into Europe. In parallel, several centuries before its use in Europe, the Chinese invented block printing and moveable type. The latter was not much used by the Chinese, due to the nature of their script.

Written evidence has shown that the Arabs knew block printing.<sup>5</sup> However, the moveable type that will be described in this paper, and the wooden printing press which was modeled after the wine and olive press, were invented by Gutenberg.

A timeline:

- 1453: The Turks invade Constantinople. End of the Greek empire of Byzantium.
- 1455: Printing of the Gutenberg Bible.
- 1473: Book V of *Qānūn fī al-ṭibb* of Avicenna, translated by Gérard de Crémone in the twelfth century, is edited in Latin in Milan.

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<sup>3</sup> Jonathan M. Bloom, *Paper before print: the history and impact of paper in the Islamic world* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 43.

<sup>4</sup> *The Lataif al-ma‘arif of Tha‘alibi = The book of curious and entertaining information*, translated with introduction and notes by C. E. Bosworth (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1968), 140.

<sup>5</sup> For an overview of some Arabic artifacts stored in European and American universities and museums, see Karl R. Schaefer, *Enigmatic charms: Medieval Arabic block printed amulets in American and European libraries and museums* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2006).

- 1512: The Fifth Council of the Lateran is convened; among other questions, the Church of the East is on the meeting's agenda.
- 1514: Arabic print is born.<sup>6</sup>

### A. First Arabic Incunabula

The *Kitāb Ṣalāt al-Sawā'ī* [Book of Hours] “represents the first attempt ever made at printing in Arabic from movable type.”<sup>7</sup> It was first printed in Arabic in 1514, in Fano, Italy, by a publisher subsidized by Pope Julius II.

The book consists of 120 leaves in octavo, and in addition to copies in the Princeton University Library and Oxford's Bodleian Library, only three other copies are known to exist in libraries in Italy. “Most probably, this book was intended for Melkite Christians in Syria.”<sup>8</sup>

1. *Kitāb Ṣalāt al-Sawā'ī*, 1514. Fano, Italy.  
كتاب صلاة السواعي بحسب طقس كنيسة الإسكندرية

The edition by Giustiniani of the Book of Psalms was the first polyglot printing of any part of the Bible. Polyglots allowed scholars to compare the various versions of the scriptures by arranging them in parallel columns, and developed from the traditions of Jewish scholars. In this volume, the text is in seven columns: Hebrew, a Latin translation of the Hebrew, the Latin Vulgate (the official Latin translation of the Bible in the 16th century), the Greek, Arabic, Aramaic, and a Latin translation of the Aramaic.

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<sup>6</sup> Josée Balagna, *L'imprimerie arabe en Occident: XVIe, XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, Collection Islam et Occident vol. 2 (Paris: Editions Maisonneuve & Larose, 1984), 17.

<sup>7</sup> Philip Hitti, “The First Book Printed in Arabic,” *The Princeton University Library Chronicle* 4 (1942), [http://ghazali.org/articles/pulc\\_v\\_4\\_n\\_1.pdf](http://ghazali.org/articles/pulc_v_4_n_1.pdf) (accessed April 27, 2017).

<sup>8</sup> Staatsbibliothek Bamberg, *The Beginnings of Printing in the Near and Middle East: Jews, Christians and Muslims* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001), 20; <http://www.historyofinformation.com/expanded.php?id=402> (accessed May 4, 2017).

2. Agostino Giustiniani, editor, 1516. *Psalterium, Hebræum, Græcum, Arabicum, et Chaldeum, cum tribus latinis interpretationibus & glossis*. Genoa: Petrus Paulus Porro.



Figure A-1. Biblioteca Historica de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid (BH FLL 25956)

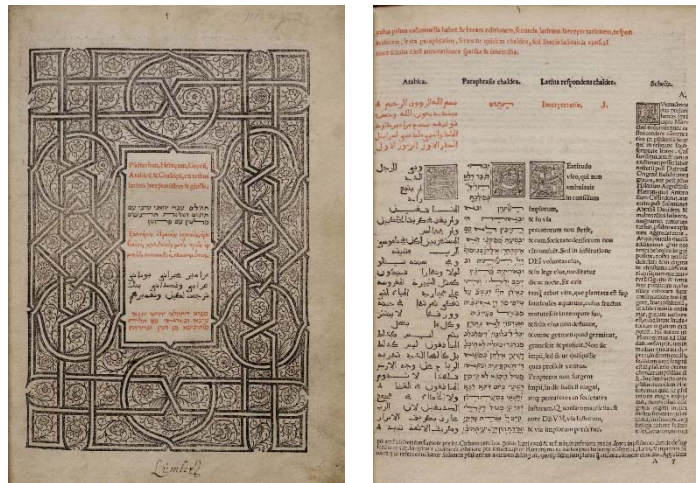


Figure A-2. © British Library Board (OR.70.d.8, pp. 2, 8).

In the Ottoman Empire, the printing of books, particularly holy ones, was forbidden for a long time; the printing of scripture was even considered a capital crime. Printing with movable type became a common practice in the Islamic world only in the nineteenth century.

As a result, the first printed Qur'an in Arabic was produced in Venice by Paganino and Alessandro Paganini in 1537/1538. The Dutch Orientalist Thomas Erpenius mentions an *Alcoranus Arabice* printed circa 1530 in Venice, but notes that “*exemplaria omnia cremata sunt*” [all examples are cremated]: no one had seen any copy of this publication and the Catholic Church was accused of burning the complete run. This rumor and mystery remained until a copy was discovered in 1987 in a monastery in Venice. It was discovered that the Paganinis, father and son, intended to export the printed version of the Qur'an to the Ottoman Empire. However, a large number of errors corrupted the meaning of the holy text.<sup>9</sup> Some scholars highlight a confusion in the usage of *dāl* and *ḍād*, for instance.

### 3. *Alcoranus Arabice*, 1537–38. Venice: Paganino and Alessandro Paganini.

القرآن العربي



Figure A-3. The only known copy of the first printed Qur'an. (Venice: Paganino and Alessandro Paganini, between 9 August 1537 and 9 August 1538). *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*.

<sup>9</sup> Arjan van Dijk, “Early Printed Qur’ans: The Dissemination of the Qur’an in the West,” *Journal of Qur’anic Studies* 7, no. 2 (2005): 136–143, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25728186> (accessed May 22, 2017).

Guillaume Postel, who came from a poor family, had a gift for languages. As an adult, he travelled to Constantinople and returned with manuscripts of the Qur'an, and various Kabbalistic and scientific texts.<sup>10</sup> Thereafter, Postel published the *Lingvarum duodecim characteribus differentium alphabetum*, on a collection of twelve "Oriental" alphabets carved in wood. The Arabic alphabet was reproduced in moving characters for his *Grammatica arabica* (1539–1543), which is available at the AUB library and the Bibliothèque Universitaire des Langues et Civilisations (BULAC) in Paris.

4. Postel Guillaume, 1538. *Lingvarum duodecim characteribus differentium alphabetum* [Language: Twelve different alphabet characters]. Paris: Lescuyer et Vidoue.

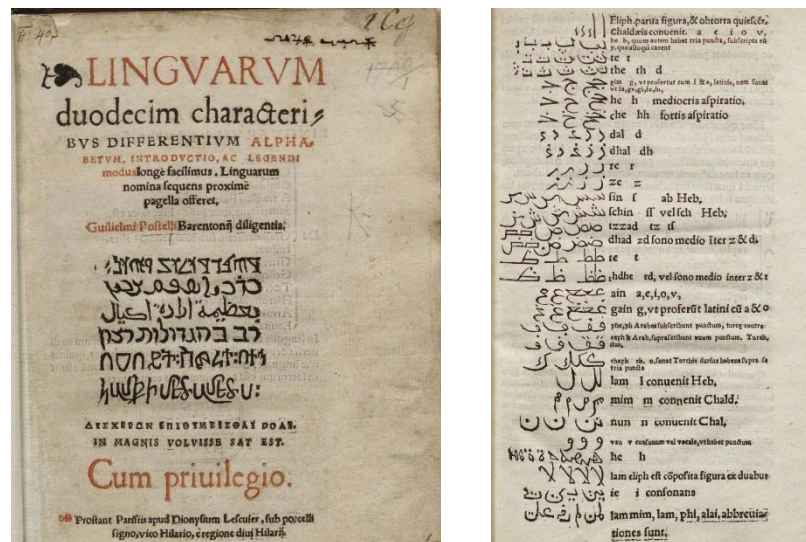


Figure A-4. © British Library Board (622.g.16 (1), pp. 2, 30).

<sup>10</sup> Harro Stammerjohann, ed., *Lexicon Grammaticorum: A bibliographical companion to the history of linguistics* (Tubingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2009), 1199.

### B. Early Arabic Books Printed in Rome

In Italy, Pope Pius IV, who wanted to spread the conclusions of the Council of Trent (1545–1563) in the East, charged the Jesuit John Baptist Eliano to procure Arabic and Syriac characters for use in the Jesuits' printing press in Rome. Eliano published various books including, in 1566, *I'tiqād al-amānah al-urtūduksīyah kanīсах rūmīyah* [sic]—*Fidei orthodoxae brevis et explicita confessio quam Sacrosanta Romana Ecclesia docet*—an Arabic translation of the profession of faith, promulgated by Pius IV, intended for Eastern Christians who claimed to be united with the Catholic Church. In 1580, he also published an Arabic catechism, *Al ta'lim al masīhī*.<sup>11</sup>

1. John Baptist Eliano, 1566. *I'tiqād al-amānah al-urtūduksīyah kanīсах rūmīyah* [sic]—*Fidei orthodoxae brevis et explicita confessio quam Sacrosanta Romana Ecclesia docet*. Romae: In Collegio Societatis Iesu.

اعتقاد الأمانة الأرثوذكسية كنيسة رومية مفسرة وكسيرة التي تعلم وتقدم لكل النصارة الذين يرجعوا عن طغيانهم لصحة الإيمان الكاثوليكي ولمن أشأ أن يتوافق معها وهو مستعد ليقدم الطاعة لبابا رومي الذي هو رئيس جميع البطارقة والأساقفة وسائر المومنين بالمسيح

After printing three books, this printing press was supplanted by the Medici Oriental Press (also known as the *Typographia Medicea*), an Oriental printing press created in 1584 by Cardinal Ferdinand de Medici. It printed nine religious books in Arabic.

2. Giovanni Battista Raimondi, editor, 1590–1591. *Evangelivm sanctvm Domini Nostri Iesu Christi conscriptvm a qvatvor Evangelistis sanctis idest, Matthaeo, Marco, Lvca, et Iohanne*. Romae, Typographia Medicea.

الانجيل المقدس لربنا يسوع المسيح المكتوب من اربع الانجيليين المقدسين، أعني متى ومرقس و لوقا و يوحنا

<sup>11</sup> D. Thomas and J. A. Chesworth, *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, vol. 7, *Central and Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and South America (1500–1600)* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 725.





Figure B-1. © British Library Board (14501.c.37, pp. 2, 4).



Figure B-2. © British Library Board (OR.70.d.6, pp. 2, 3).



In the second half of the sixteenth century, printing in Arabic began to spread to secular works. A book of Arabic grammar was published for the first time in 1592, one by Ibn al-Ḥājjib. A copy of the book is owned by BULAC and another by Yale University.

3. ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Umar Ibn al-Ḥājjib, 1592. *Kāfiyah li-Ibn al-Ḥājjib*. Rome: Typographia Medicea.

كافية لابن الحاجب , عثمان بن عمر ابن الحاجب



Figure B-3. © British Library Board (622.h.3 (1), pp. 1, 2).

Another book, one by Henry Howard, Duke of Norfolk on the Arabic alphabet, was also published by the Typographia Medicea the same year.

4. Henry Howard, Duke of Norfolk, 1592. *Alphabetum arabicum*. Rome: Typographia Medicea.

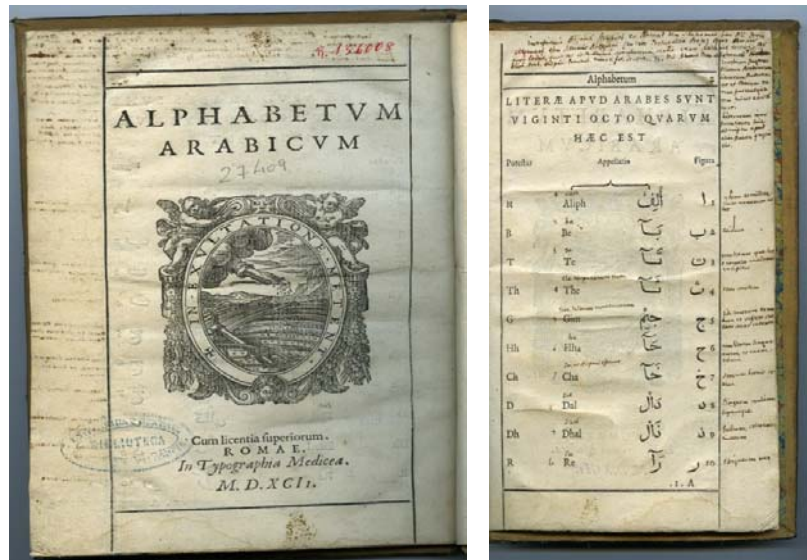


Figure B-4. Biblioteca Historica de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid (BH FLL 25956)

Avicenna's *Canon of Medicine* was published in 1593. This work was translated into Latin at the end of the twelfth century, and until the end of the seventeenth century the translation was used as a reference in medical studies in European universities.<sup>12</sup>

5. Al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Abd Allāh Ibn Sīnā, 1593. *Kutub al-qānūn fī al-ṭibb li-Abī 'Alī al-Shaykh al-Ra'īs Ibn Sīnā ma'a ba'd ta'ālīfihī wa-hiya 'ilm al-manṭiq wa 'ilm al-ṭabī'ī wa 'ilm al-kalām; Najāt; Shifā'*—*The Canon of Medicine*. Rome: Typographia Medica.

كتب القانون في الطب لأبي علي الشيخ الرئيس ابن سينا مع بعض تأليفه وهي علم المنطق وعلم الطبيعى وعلم الكلام نجاة شفاء

In 1578, Pope Gregory XIII opened a Maronite college in Rome, bringing together Arabic and Syriac scholars who would play a key role in the printing of Arabic texts in France and Italy. Scholars such as Jibrā'il al-Ṣihyūnī (Gabriel Sionita), Yūḥannā al-Ḥaṣrūnī (John Hesronite), Sarkīs, al-Rāzī, 'Abd Allāh Shalaq al-'Āqūrī (Victorio Scialac), Ibrāhīm al-Hāqlānī (Abraham Ecchellensis), and Jirjis, Amīrah were almost all former pupils at the Maronite school of Rome.

In 1613 while in Rome, Savary de Brèves (French ambassador to the Sublime Porte in 1591 and 1604, who was also one of the leading Arabic and Turkish scholars of his time, thanks to his twenty years residence in the East) set up his own publishing house, the Typographia Savariana printing press, and had printed four Arabic books by 1619.

He began to recruit collaborators: Gabriel Sionita and Victorio Scialac ('Abd Allāh Shalaq al-'Āqūrī), who was a Maronite priest. He taught Arabic at the Maronite College of Rome, and founded the Maronite College of Ravenna, Italy.

<sup>12</sup>Abd Al-Rahman Al-Naqib, "Avicenna (Ibn Sina) (A.D. 980?–1037/A.H. 370?–428)," *Prospects* 23, nos. 1–2 (1993): 53.



Figure B-5. American University of Beirut <http://ddc.aub.edu.lb/projects/saab/avicenna/book-one.html>

6. Gabriel Sionita and Victorio Scialac, translators, 1614. *Liber Psalmorum Davidis Regis et Prophetæ*. Typographia Savariana.

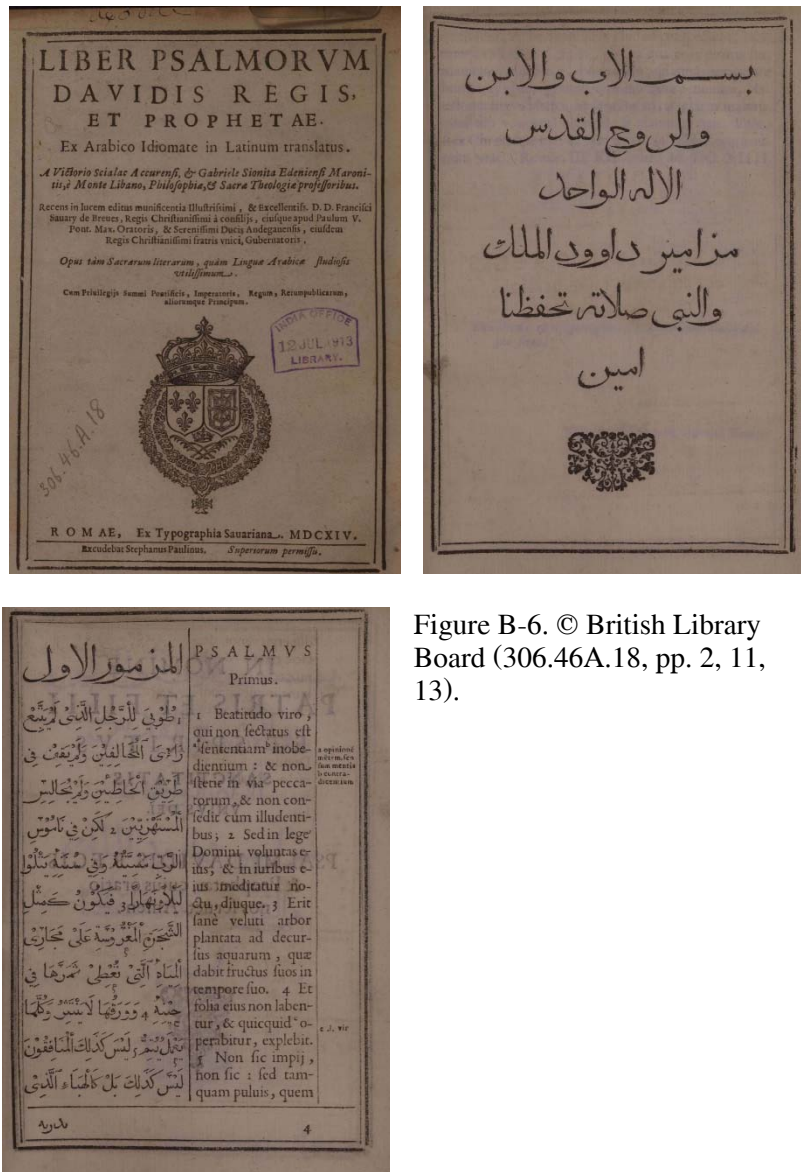


Figure B-6. © British Library Board (306.46A.18, pp. 2, 11, 13).

A work on the Arabic alphabet was co-authored by Sionita and Scialac and printed at the Typographia Savariana in 1622.

7. Victorio Scialac, 1622. *Totum arabicum alphabetum, ad unam tabellam cum suis vocalibus et signis, facilitatis causa, reductum, ab abbate Victorio Scialach*. Romae: Apud S. Paulinum. [no image]

### C. Arabic Printing in France

Thanks to Typographia Savariana's shift to Paris (1614–1618) France inaugurated its publications in Arabic in 1616 with a book of grammar prepared by Jibrā'il al-Šihyūnī and Yūḥannā al-Ḥaṣṣrūnī.

1. Gabriel Sionita and John Hesronite, 1616. *Kitāb fī šinā'at al-naḥwīyah—Grammatica arabica Maronitarum in libros quinque divisa*. Lutetiae: [Paris] Ex Typographia Savariana. [no image]

كتاب في صناعة النحوية يشتمل على خمسة اجزاء

After the death of de Brèves, Antoine Vitré, a French printer who specialized in Oriental languages, bought the Oriental characters from de Brèves' heirs. He published fourteen books on Arabic grammar, history, philosophy, catechesis, and scripture,<sup>13</sup> among which was the polyglot Bible of Paris in 10 volumes, published from 1628 until 1645. It was written in Hebrew, Samaritan, Chaldean, Greek, Syriac, Latin, and Arabic.

2. Guy-Michel Le Jay, 1632. *Biblia 1. Hebraica, 2. Samaritana, 3. Chaldaica, 4. Graeca, 5. Syriaca, 6. Latina, 7. Arabica. Quibus textus originales totius Scripturae sacrae, quorum pars in editione Complutensi, deinde in Antverpiensi regiis sumptibus extat, nunc integri, ex manuscriptis toto ferè orbe quaesitis exemplaribus, exhibentur*. Lutetiae: Parisiorum, excudebat Antonius Vitré.

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<sup>13</sup> Wahid Gdoura, *Le début de l'imprimerie arabe à Istanbul et en Syrie: évolution de l'environnement culturel (1706–1787)* (Tunis: Institut Supérieur de Documentation, 1985), 31.





Figure C-2. © British Library Board (1.h.1-8 &amp; 2.h.1-2, pp. 1, 3).

Scialac also collaborated with Sionita in the publication of Cardinal Bellarmine's *Doctrina Christiana* (1613) in Latin with the Arabic translation.

3. Roberto Bellarmina, Vittorio Scialac, and Gabriel Sionita, 1635. *Doctrina Christiana*. Paris: Soc. Typogr. Librorum Ecclesiastici.

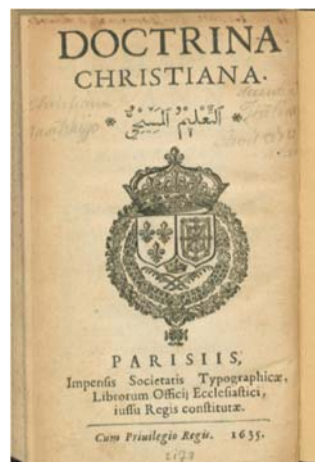


Figure C-3. Bonn Universitäts und Landesbibliothek (13, 143 S)

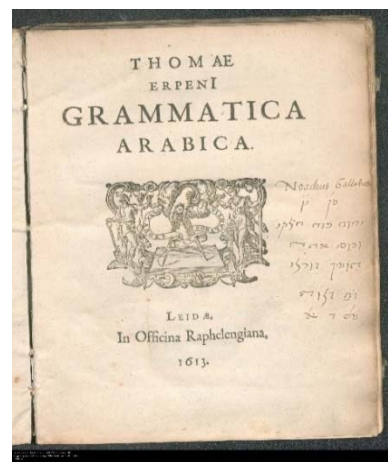


Figure D-1. The Wellcome Library, London (7198/D)

#### D. The Arabic Printing Press of the Dutch Republic

Printing presses that printed in Eastern languages were established at first by the universities of Utrecht, Amsterdam, and principally Leiden to provide training for preachers of the Reformed Church.

The most important Arabic printing press in the United Provinces was that of the University of Leiden, which published, in 1595, an 8-page booklet designed to introduce the new Arabic characters. Thirty-eight books were published there between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including the *Grammatica Arabica* of Thomas Van Erpe (known as Erpenius) of 1613.

Erpenius was an Orientalist who studied theology at Leiden. He devoted himself to Oriental languages. In 1608, he studied Arabic in England and Paris, and he chaired the Arabic department in Leiden in 1613, where he was also appointed professor of Hebrew in 1619. He worked as a translator for the government of the Republic.<sup>14</sup>

Among the thirty-eight books published in Leiden between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are *The Book of Proverbs*, 1614; *The New Testament*, 1616; *Sūrat Yūsuf*, 1617; and the *Golijs Dictionary: Lexicon Arabico-Latinum*, 1653.

1. Thomas Erpenius, 1613. *Grammatica Arabica*. Leiden: Officina Raphelangiana.

2. Thomas Erpenius, 1617. *Sūrat Yūsuf wa-Tahajjī al-‘Arab—Historia Josephi patriarchæ, ex Alcorano arabice*. Leiden: Ex Typographia Erpeniana.  
سورة يوسف وتهجي العرب

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<sup>14</sup> Ernestine G. E. Van der Wall, “Erpenius, Thomas,” in: *Religion Past and Present*, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1877-5888\\_rpp\\_SIM\\_04558](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1877-5888_rpp_SIM_04558) (accessed March 13, 2018).





Figure D-2. © British Library Board (483.a.18, pp. 2, 8).

Jacobus Golius was a mathematician and an Orientalist.

3. Jacobi Golii, 1653. *Lexicon Arabico-Latinum, contentum ex probatioribus orientis lexicographis. Accedit Index Latinus*. Leiden: Typis Bonaventurae & Abrahami Elseviriorum. Prostant Amstelodami apud Johannem Ravensteynium.

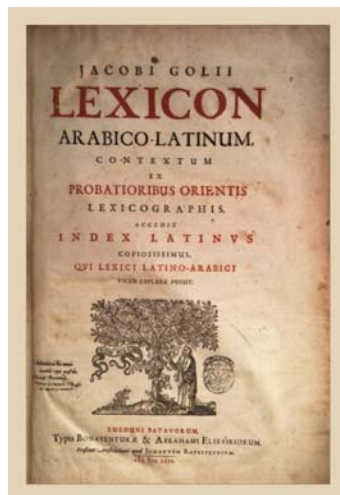


Figure D-3. American University of Beirut-University Libraries (CA: R 492.73:G62kA:c.1)

### E. The Arabic Printing Press in Germany

From early on, there was a strong interest at German universities in studying Oriental languages. After Hebrew, the Arabic language attracted the largest number of German scholars and theologians. Several universities set up chairs for Arabic departments in the mid-sixteenth century even before publishing Arabic books, which they began to do in 1583 in Heidelberg.

Orientalist professors succeeded in making Arabic type characters at their own expense, and such characters were named after the professor who created them, rather than being named for a typographic center. One such scholar who manufactured Arabic characters, a physician named Peter Kirsten, originally from Sweden, published an Arabic grammar in 1608, and the following year he published the second book of the *Canon* of Avicenna at his own expense. He later became court physician to Queen Christina of Sweden and professor of medicine at Uppsala.

1. Al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Sīnā, [1610]. *At-tanī min Qanun al-Qanun id est: Liber secundus de Canone Canonis studio ... Petri Kirsten ... arabice per partes editus ... et in latinum translatus, notisque illustratus*. Edited and translated by Peter Kirsten, Breslæ: [s.n.]. [no image]

كتاب الثاني من قانون القانون لابن سينا

Johann Heinrich Hottinger was a professor of Oriental languages and Biblical criticism at the University of Heidelberg. He published various books, including the following three books:

2. Johann Heinrich Hottinger, 1658. *Promptuarium; sive, Bibliotheca orientalis: exhibens catalogum, sive, centurias aliquot, tam authorum, quàm librorum hebraicorum, syriacorum, arabicorum, ægyptiacorum, æthiopicorum, &c. Addita mantissa bibliothecarum aliquot Europæarum, tam publicarum, quam privatarum; ex quibus, quid deinceps etiam præstari possit ab alijs, luculenter monstratur. Scriptum, quod theologorum, iurisconsultorum, medicorum, & philosophorum accommodatum est studijs*. Heidelbergæ, typis & impensis Adriani Wyngaerden.

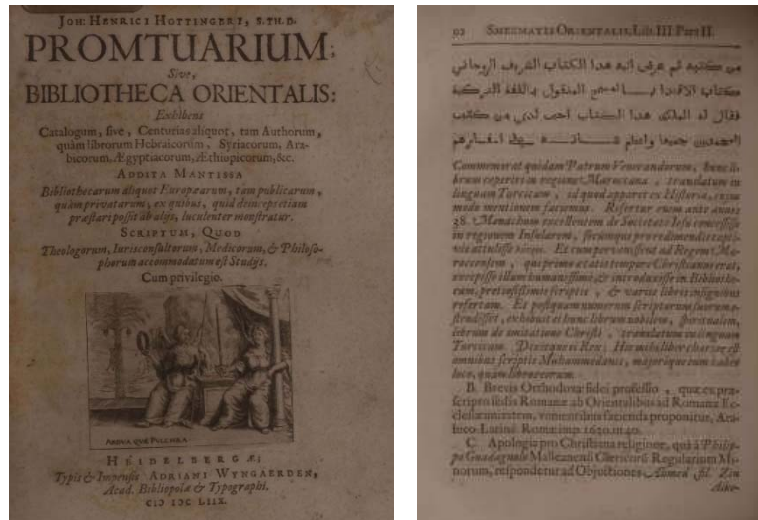


Figure E-2. © British Library Board (219.k.14 (2), pp. 1, 100).

3. Johann Heinrich Hottinger, 1660. *Historia orientalis quæ ex variis orientalium monumentis collecta ...* / authore Joh. Henrico Hottingero. Tiguri : Typis Joh. Jacobi Bodmeri.

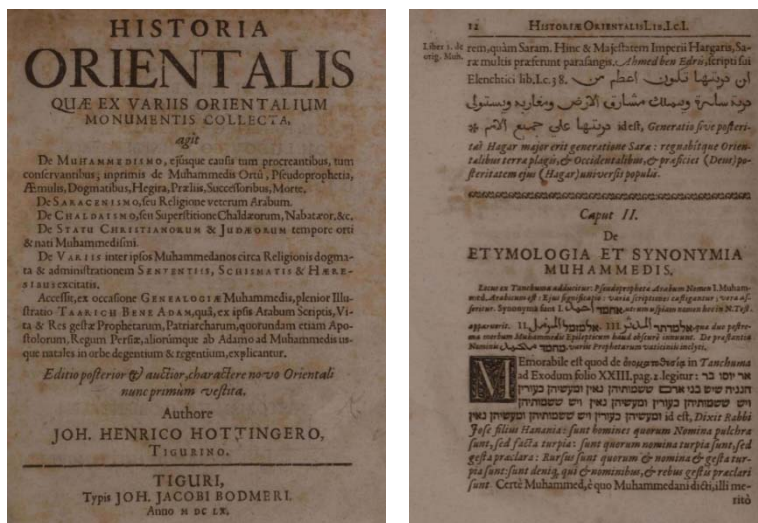


Figure E-3. © British Library Board (279.d.30, pp. 4, 35).

4. Johann Heinrich Hottinger, 1662. *Apxaio [lambda] o [gamma] ia orientalis : exhibens I. Compendium theatri orientalis, de Arabum, Persarum, Turcarum ... II. Topographiam ecclesiasticam orientalem ... / autore Joh. Henrico Hottingero. Heidelbergae : Typis Samuelis Broun...* [no image]

A few years after publishing the above listed books, Johann Heinrich Hottinger drowned in the river Limmat (June 1667), in the southern part of the city of Zurich. His death was a loss for the entire Reformed world. His student Johann Heinrich Heidegger (1633–98) succeeded him.<sup>15</sup>

In addition to these works, the Qur'an was published for the first time in its entirety in Hamburg in 1694 by Abraham Hinckelmann (also spelled Hinckelmann), a German Protestant theologian and Islamologist. The original copy is held by Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart, Germany.

5. Abraham Hinckelmann, 1694. *Al-Coranus S. [Sive] Lex Islamatica Muhammedis*. Hamburg: Ex officina Schultzio-Schilleriana.

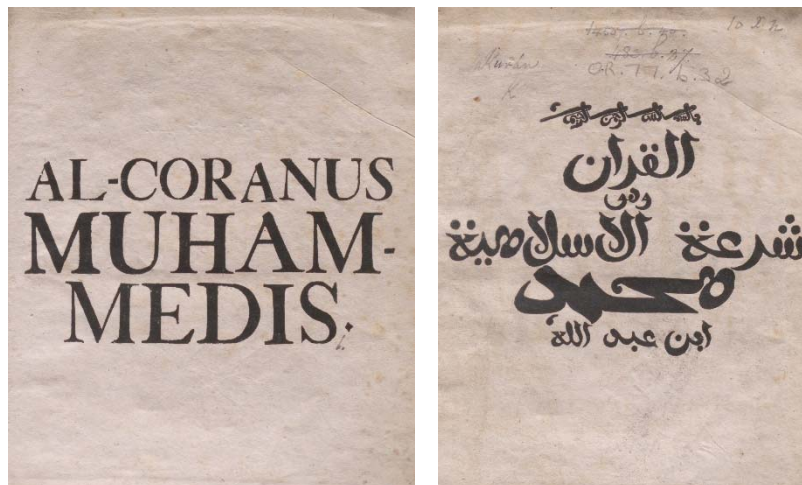


Figure E-5. © British Library Board (14507.b.40, pp. 6, 7).

<sup>15</sup> Jan Loop, *Johann Heinrich Hottinger: Arabic and Islamic studies in the seventeenth century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

## F. The Arabic Printing Press in the United Kingdom

In the seventeenth century there were two printing presses, one affiliated with the University of Oxford and the other with the University of London. Initially, the absence of engravers capable of melting the necessary stampers and Arabic matrices seems to have led Arabic teachers to print their books in Hebrew characters. Stampers and matrices were finally bought from Leiden.<sup>16</sup>

Arabic printing in England did not start until late in 1642. The first English book printed in Arabic and Latin was published in London by John Selden. Befriended by Edward Pococke and with his help, Selden translated into Latin, edited, and published some excerpts from Saʿīd Ibn al-Bitrīq (Eutychius), the tenth Melkite Patriarch of Alexandria (933–939). This brief part of the *Annales* in Arabic recounts the early years of the church of Alexandria following the time of Mark the evangelist.

1. Eutychius, Patriarch of Alexandria, 1642. *Eutychii Ægyptii, Patriarchæ Orthodoxorum Alexandrini*. Edited by John Selden, Excudebat Richardus Bishopus.

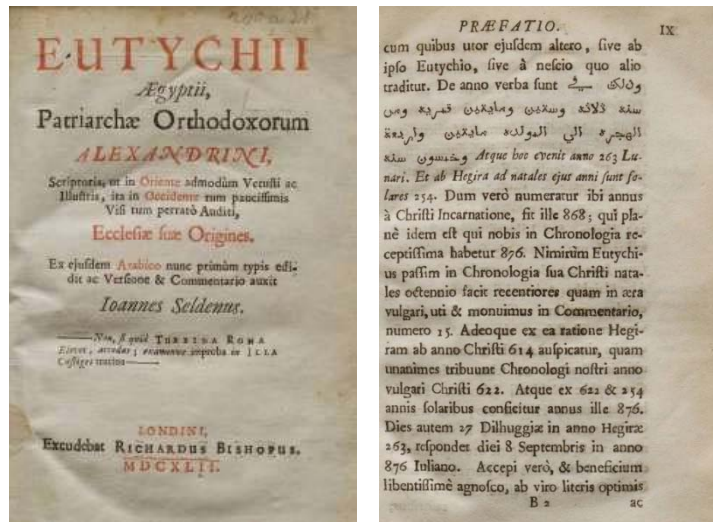


Figure F-1. © British Library Board (200.a.21, pp. 5, 15).

<sup>16</sup> Gdoura, *Le début de l'imprimerie arabe*, 33–34.



In 1650, Pococke edited and published a short account of the origin and manners of the Arabs, taken from Gregory Bar Hebraeus (also known by his Latin name Abulfaragius or Ibn al-ʿIbrī). Inaugurating a new stage in the study of Islam in Europe, a second edition of the same title was also published in 1806.

The book is divided into two parts: the first is a long excerpt from Bar Hebraeus' Arabic text of the chronicle (which he would later publish in full), side by side with Pococke's Latin translation; the second consists of Pococke's notes, over 300 pages.<sup>17</sup>

2. Edward Pococke, ed., 1650. *Specimen historiae Arabum, sive, Gregorii Abul Farajii Malatiensis: de origine & moribus Arabum succincta narratio, in linguam Latinam conversa, notisque è probatissimis apud ipsos authoribus, fufius illustrata*. Oxford: H. Hall.

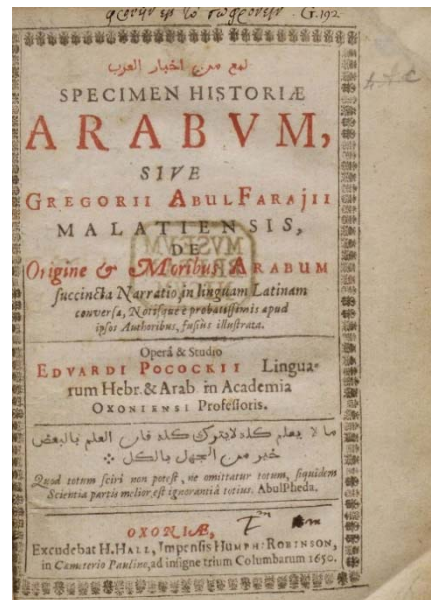


Figure F-2. © British Library Board (14549.b.2, pp. 2).

<sup>17</sup> P. M. Holt, "The Study of Islam in Seventeenth-and Eighteenth-Century England," *Journal of Early Modern History* 2 (1998): 113–123.

3. Edward Pococke, Joseph White, and Antoine Isaac Silvestre de Sacy, 1806. *Specimen historiae Arabum: Accessit Historia veterum Arabum*. Oxford: ex Abulfeda. Clarendon.

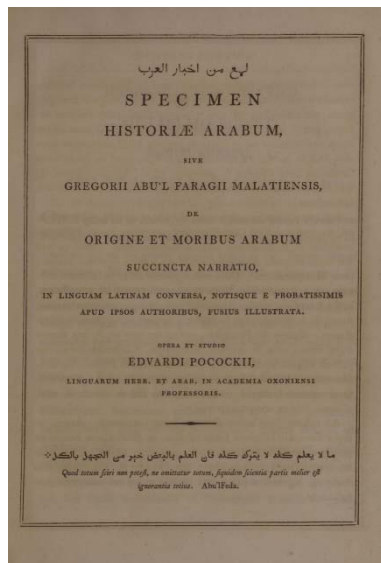
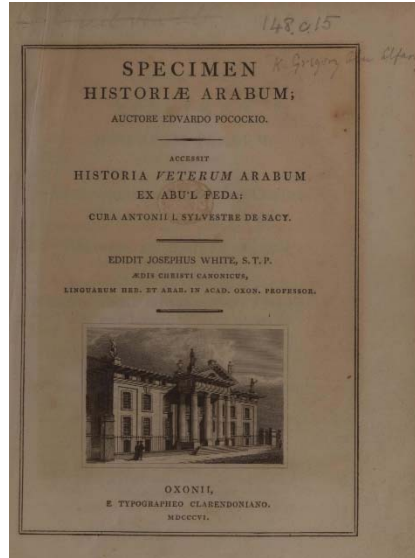
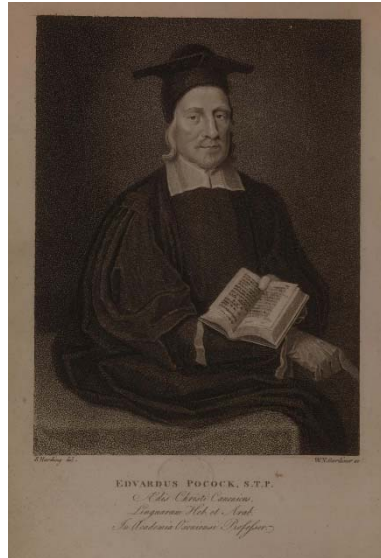


Figure F-3. © British Library Board (148.c.15, pp. 1-3).

Another book by Bar Hebraeus:

4. Bar Hebraeus and E. Pococke, 1663. *Specimen Historiae Arabum, Sive Gregorii Abul Farajii Malatiensis, De Origine & Moribus Arabum: succincta Narratio, in linguam Latinam conversa, Notisque è probatissimis apud ipsos Authoribus, fusiùs illustrata*. Oxoniae: excudebat H. Hall [variant title: *Tārīkh mukhtaṣar al-duwal*]

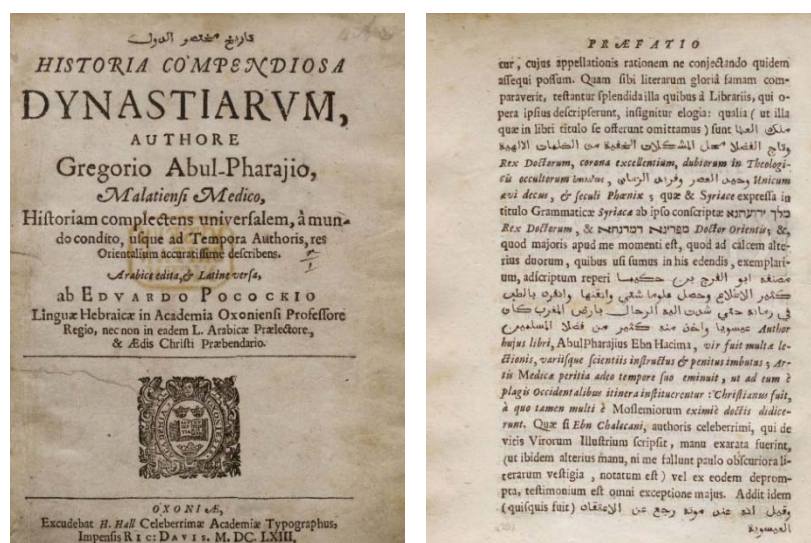


Figure F-4. © British Library Board (14549.b.3, pp. 2, 8).

The astronomer, jurist, and mathematician John Greaves also became the friend of Selden and Pococke. In 1637, desiring to discover the Orient, Greaves embarked with Pococke to Egypt by way of Constantinople.

In 1650, he translated and edited a book written by Abū al-Fidā', a Kurdish historian and local governor of Hama, describing Khwarazm and the lands beyond the Amu Darya river (historically known by its Latin name Oxus), that is, Turkestan.



5. John Greaves, ed. and trans., 1650. *Chorasmiae et Mawaralnahræ hoc est regionum extra fluvium Oxum, descriptio Abulfedæ Ismaelis, principis Hamah*. Londini: s.n.

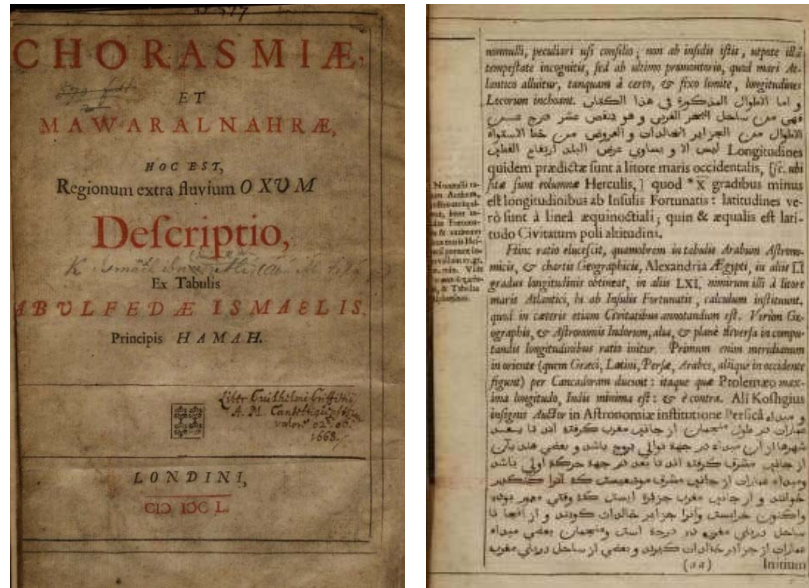


Figure F-5. © British Library Board (570.f.25, pp. 2, 10).

At the end of the eighteenth century, Bucharest, Vienna, Moscow, Madrid, and Lisbon contributed to the evolution of Arab printing.

It is with Bonaparte's expedition, the French Campaign in Egypt and Syria (1798–1801), that Paris provides Cairo with a complete set of Arabic typographical characters and material. Arabic printing spread to the Levant, Constantinople, and Choueir in Mount Lebanon.

## REVIEWS

*Gilgamesh's snake and other poems.* By Ghareeb Iskander. Translated from the Arabic by John Glenday and Ghareeb Iskander. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2016. Pp. 103. ISBN: 9780815610717 (paperback).

Ghareeb Iskander, an Iraqi poet living in London, has published collections of his own poems in Arabic and has translated works from Arabic to English and English to Arabic. John Glenday, co-translator of this work, is an award-winning Scottish poet with notable works such as *Undark*, *Grain*, and *The Golden Mean*. This book is a bilingual Arabic-English edition; some parts of it have been previously published in the United Kingdom. Glenday's translation along with the author's has added an aesthetic touch to the English version.

A brief background on the Gilgamesh Epic might be helpful in understanding the poems in this book. The Gilgamesh Epic is one of the most important literary works of the Middle East. It is named after the hero of the story, Gilgamesh, who was the king of the city of Uruk. The epic, which was forgotten for quite some time, is about his journey, adventures with his best friend, and seeking immortality after his friend's death. The epic came to light after the re-discovery of the cuneiform tablets in the British Museum's collection in the early 1870s. According to Ziolkowski,<sup>1</sup> Western culture sees in this epic a reflection of spiritual values such love and friendship. Other artists and writers have adapted this ancient epic to express love and loss in postwar periods, or to bring awareness to issues such as sexism, feminism, environmentalism, and gay rights.

Iskander's focus, however, is on contemporary Iraq and what it has gone through in the last decades, using Gilgamesh's iconic figure:

A series of rooms filled to overflowing with rags taken from  
the dead,

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<sup>1</sup> T. Ziolkowski, *Gilgamesh Among Us: Modern Encounters with the Ancient Epic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).

That's why my country is—  
The music of misery and destruction.  
Once upon a time, it wouldn't have been recognized.  
Many factions: both old and new  
Thieves  
Pimps  
Wheeler-dealers  
Gun-runners  
Slave traders  
Sloganmongers. (p. 11)  
....

He walks the streets of Uruk,  
Meets strangers  
Who look like him,  
Their names like his name,  
But they are strangers.  
Strangers  
In this unrecognizable land. (p. 29)

Other poems of this book are reflections of pain and loss. In "The book of silence," the author uses Gilgamesh's pain at the loss of his friend:

The seas we raced across  
Toward a destination  
Or hope.  
Friendship undone, just like our lives,  
Our endless cold nights,  
Tales of longing,  
Stories of the departed  
Who never return.  
Strangers to both  
Home and exile. (p. 39)

"The book of oblivion" touches love and oblivion at the same time:

Soul, I don't crave your flame,  
Nor do I lust after your flame, my body,

I only long for those rare times  
 When we talked of love  
 Or even death,  
 When we talked of your going away,  
 Smelling the blossoms of our first kiss,  
 The brilliance that has faded like a dream  
 And the hopes that withered afterwards. (p. 71)

“The book of tears” is about women, love, loss, and sorrow:

Woman, who are you to keep the dawn at bay?  
 Who are you to say there is no place  
 For fear, or fate in all this dark  
 Where the light vanishes utterly  
 And that great mountain. The darkness, weighs down on my  
 heart? (p. 85)

....

The two of us and the spell—  
 That’s an equation I always dreamed of,  
 So why was I so afraid as you drew near  
 Woman  
 Who thinks fire  
 Is a form of resurrection  
 Just as the body  
 When it stands consumed  
 Like a flame-scorched butterfly  
 As ever  
 To protect itself by fleeing  
 From the fire of soul  
 To the fire of body! (pp. 95, 97)

The collection ends with a single poem in “Labyrinth,” telling the reader that “...perhaps you’ll find nothing worth the telling, in this poem.” On the other hand, it also calls the reader of the book to not stop and to live life with hope, even in moments of sorrow, pain, or “cold,” as the poet calls it:

Don’t stop  
 Don’t stop  
 At life’s center.

Finish it,  
 This orphaned day.  
 Draw close  
 To the maze.  
 And lay your hands on it;  
 Touch it.  
 You may see embers glowing  
 Beneath the appearance of cold,  
 Or you may find tears.  
 Or perhaps you'll find nothing  
 Worth the telling, in this poem. (p. 103)

In general, this book extracts both the mythical and mystical natures of the Gilgamesh Epic and transforms them into modern poetry. It is a unique book of poetry because the author has also participated in the translation of the poems. Iskander shapes the translation by applying modern poetics and non-linguistic characteristics of the original poems, knowing the culture and history behind them. Glenday's literary translation then completes this professional translation. Their translation work together brings a harmony in rhyme, without losing the original meaning and intention of the poet, from Arabic into its English version. It is an appropriate source for any library with a literary collection focused on poetry, Middle East studies, and Middle Eastern literature.

SHAHRAZAD KHOSROWPOUR

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

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*An intellectual history of Turkish nationalism: between Turkish ethnicity and Islamic identity.* By Umut Uzer. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016. Pp. xi, 276. ISBN: 9781607814658.

This book is a comprehensive study of Turkish nationalism and how its hegemonic status rose over time but declined in the twenty-first century.

The author, an associate professor in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at Istanbul Technical University,

discusses the ideological evolution and development of Turkish nationalism from the late nineteenth century moving forward. He first starts with the changes during the Ottoman Empire and how groups of minorities (ethnic or religious) such as Greek, Turk, Armenian, Muslim, or Christian started seeking independence and how the Kemalist, ethnic, and conservative nationalism in different periods of time evolved. At the end he emphasizes that the hegemonic position of nationalism, which once acted as the soldier of the state and the protector of the political and social order of the nation, would no longer be guaranteed at the governmental or societal level. Nevertheless, it will survive the global oppression and conflict of identities at the international and domestic level.

Uzer claims that in the early years of the Ottoman Empire a multiplicity of identities existed, but toward the end of that era, dual loyalties such as Kurdish-Ottoman or Arab-Ottoman were experienced. Islam, for example, held a significant place in the identity of Muslim people and was not perceived as a religion but more as an instrument of legitimacy, mediation, balance, and mobilization. This perception was current among both Muslims and Christians under the Ottoman Empire as their ethnic and religious identities were articulated. With politicized Islam returning in the 1980s, Islam in each country started to work within its national boundaries, with the exception of al-Qaeda and ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria).

This book includes five chapters. Chapter one captures the changes from Ottomanism to Turkism. It depicts how almost all of the early nationalists believed in a secular form of Turkish nationalism with some Westernized elements in it. They expressed the need for change in society and the way that religion operates, and their desire for gender equality. Even with these reforms, the identification of Muslims and Turks resulted in the rise of a conservative nationalism in the 1960s, the author claims.

In chapter two, the author uses as examples two figures of the early twentieth century, Yusuf Akçura and Ziya Gökalp, who influenced the idea of nationalism among intellectuals within a cultural, social, and political elite. Their lectures and publications defend the need to establish a Turkish national state along Western lines with secularism and women's right but without Ottomanism, which had lost its viability. Even though these two figures (with different social backgrounds) contributed in their own ways to early

Turkish nationalism during the Unionist and Kemalist era, their intentions were actually different. While Gökalp was leaning toward creating a harmonious relationship between the classes, Akçura was aiming to establish a nation bourgeoisie within a modern state.

Chapter three's focus is on Kemalist nationalism relying on a central power in developing Turkish politics in the twentieth century. Despite Kemalism's losing ground, the author says it may come back to life at some point from the military side rather than from civil society. He gives an example from the current government (Recep Tayip Erdoğan), who is using Kemal Atatürk more as an expression than actual appreciation of Atatürk in order to score points against the opposition parties. Currently, Kemalism seems not to be legitimate but at the same time there might be an open door for it to continue to exist, in some reformed version or as it is.

Chapter four is about racism and pan-Turkism, and the author offers some clarification on the concepts of Turkism, Kemalism, ethnic nationalism, and pan-Turkism. Turkist nationalism was inspired by the educational system and the political statements of Kemalist Turkey. While Kemalist nationalism is all about the cultural and historical connection among the Turks around the world, it did not really follow the same path of ethnic nationalism. Kemalists controlled the state functions which ruled supreme over the national interest. The author gives the İnönü government as an example, showing how in an incident in 1944 it oppressed the extreme nationalists with arrests and torture. This was the breaking point between the Kemalists and the ethnic nationalists, Uzer says. The pan-Turk ideology, on the other hand, was strongly advocating the liberation of the captive Turks. In 1991, with the independence of five Turkic republics, "Turkic-Turkic world cooperation and solidarity" became the policy of Turkic states. At that point ethnic nationalism became more of a conservative nationalism.

Chapter five discusses the transformation of Turkish nationalism from a secular to a conservative form. It talks about the past few decades and how the ideology of nationalism changed to conservative nationalism and paved its way to Turkish-Islamic synthesis, or a Turkish-Islamic ideal. The chapter gives examples of the arrival of democracy and conservatism, the different party systems in Turkey, and their political and social clashes.

This book is an appropriate source for any academic and research libraries that have a focus on Middle Eastern Studies. It is

useful for learning the political structure of Turkey from the early nineteenth century to the present. The book has an informative concluding chapter which analyzes the relevant domestic and international political and social factors, the intersection of nationalism and Islamism, and how different political/national parties represented these ideologies over the course of changes and movements in Turkey. It has a comprehensive list of bibliographic sources for each chapter, which is very helpful.

SHAHRZAD KHOSROWPOUR

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*The Arabic Print Revolution: Cultural Production and Mass Readership.* By Ami Ayalon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016. Pp. 234.

Ami Ayalon's *The Arabic Print Revolution: Cultural Production and Mass Readership* is a well-researched, detailed, and insightful study of the production and circulation of large amounts of Arabic printed materials in the Ottoman Empire (mostly in the empire's Arabic-speaking provinces) from 1800 to 1914. By focusing on the long nineteenth century, Ayalon seeks to shed light on the infrastructure that enabled the major intellectual and social developments throughout the Ottoman Middle East, including, but not exclusively, the Arabic *Nahda*. To a considerable extent, *The Arabic Print Revolution* builds on the author's previous studies on the emergence of the press in the Arab world (*The Press in the Arab Middle East: A History*, Oxford University Press, 1995) and the emergence of printing and mass readership in Palestine in the first half of the twentieth century (*Reading Palestine: Printing and Literacy, 1900–1948*, University of Texas Press, 2004). This volume, however, differs from these studies in terms of its geographical and chronological scopes.

Over seven chapters, Ayalon examines three aspects of what he calls (following Elizabeth Eisenstein's famous book) "the Arabic print revolution": production (printing and publishing), the rise of mass readership, and the formation of diffusion channels that spanned the Arabic-speaking lands (including the Ottoman capital



and North Africa). After a brief historical overview of the earlier attempts to establish printing presses in the Arabic-speaking lands in the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century and their limited success (chapter 1), chapters 2–3 examine the appearance of a considerable number of printers and publishers over the course of the second half of nineteenth century. Chapters 4–5 turn to the diffusion channels (bookstores, libraries) and circulation (agents, mail delivery services) of Arabic printed materials. Finally, chapters 6–7 look at the gradual evolution of Arab readership and of venues where printed texts were read aloud (such as coffee shops). Throughout, despite the book's general argument that the introduction of the printing press was revolutionary, the author is sensitive to the complex interplay between continuity and change in the gradual process whereby print became a predominant medium across the Middle East: while some formats and media as well as the scope of the circulation of printed materials were clearly innovative, in many cases there were clear continuities (many scholarly and literary genres and practices, for instance, survived the transition from the manuscript to the printed book).

Ayalon's book can also be read as a rich reference work. In fact, one of the book's merits is the documentation of titles and publishers that are not represented in most library collections. For example, Ayalon notes that "[a] search in the Worldcat database of holdings in many thousands of libraries has turned out a mere six items [out of 281 known published titles] in Arabic and one in Turkish that were printed in *matba'at jurji habib hananiya* until 1908" (p. 55). Furthermore, although Ayalon is not particularly interested in the history of library collections in Europe and North America, the story he narrates in the book illuminates their history. In this sense, the book contributes to a better understanding of the diffusion channels that were so instrumental in the development of European and American collections.

It is worth stressing that other aspects of the revolution, such as printing technology, the intellectual content of the publications, and the revolution's broader political and social ramification are left out or dealt with in passing. For the most part, the author's decision to focus on certain aspects of the "print revolution" while leaving out others is justifiable. However, it appears to me that chapter 3, which deals with the printed titles, suffers from the book's general disregard of the content of the works published and the various relationships between the published texts. In his survey of the

published “classical” titles, that is, works written before the eighteenth century, the author argues that “[c]ontinuity was most visible in the choice of works to be printed, many of which came from the old literary and scholarly heritage” (p. 72). In the following page Ayalon lists numerous “classical” titles that were published over the course of the nineteenth century. But Ayalon does not pay enough attention, I think, to the manner in which the “classical” status of these works was constituted through the published printed edition. In other words, the “print revolution” also helped to define a “classical” canon. The case of al-Mawardi’s *al-Ahkam al-sultaniyya* is a case in point. Published in Egypt in 1880, after it had already been published in Vienna in 1850, al-Mawardi’s work became quite popular and was indeed canonized as one of the foundational works on Islamic political thought. However, as Hüseyin Yılmaz has shown, *al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyya* was not very popular during the Ottoman period. It is through the printed editions, first in Vienna and then in Cairo, that the work gained its “classical” status. Moreover, the printed editions often ignored significant differences and variations that existed between manuscript copies of the same title.

To conclude, Ayalon’s study of the institutions and networks that enabled the mass proliferation of printed materials is a valuable addition to the growing body of works on the history of printing and its impact in the Arabic Middle East. Historians of the Middle Eastern book and collectors of Arabic printed materials will surely find this insightful book of great interest and use.

GUY BURAK

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*Felâatun Bey and Râkım Efendi: an Ottoman novel.* By Ahmet Midhat Efendi. Translated from Turkish by Melih Levi and Monica M. Ringer, with an afterward by A. Holly Shissler. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2016. Pp. xxii, 167. ISBN: 9780815610649 (paperback).

This book is a translation by Melih Levi and Monica M. Ringer of a novel written by Ahmet Mithat Efendi (known also as Ahmet Midhat Efendi), who was one of the leading figures in literature when the Tanzimat reform took place in the Ottoman Empire in the

nineteenth century. The purpose of this reform was to modernize the empire; however, by embracing Western literature, which also introduced its culture, it caused some major changes to traditional Ottoman literature as well as the traditional Ottoman lifestyle. The changes in the socio-economic and political life of Turkey at that time started to be reflected in their literature. As a writer in the Tanzimat period, Ahmet Midhat Efendi (1844–1912) wrote various novels with the hope of contributing to the new era in Ottoman literature that was affected by developments in the Ottoman social structure.

The novel takes place in the late nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire in Istanbul, Turkey. It plots the lives of two young men (Felâtun Bey and Râkım Efendi) who come from very different backgrounds. Râkım is a hard-working man with a modest background. He has grown up in poverty and lost his father when he was one year old. But he was supported by his mother and later by the care of their devoted slave woman, Fedayi. He educated himself in different ways, and took advantage of every opportunity later on in his life to secure a government office job. At the same time, he was teaching, writing, and translating to be able to afford a comfortable life. Felâtun, on the other hand, is the son of a very wealthy man whose wife passed away while giving birth to their second child, a daughter called Mihriban Hanım. He provided his son, Felâtun Bey, a fancy education that really did not bring him any expertise, accomplishment, awareness, or career, and he has been dependent on his father's wealth. He is an aimless man who is wandering around and rarely showing up at a government post which was offered to him through a family connection. Felâtun Bey's character resembles a typical "alafranga" dandy, as Shissler quotes in the afterword. He is indeed a slave to European fashion and their lifestyles without really knowing actual Western culture. In contrast, Râkım Efendi's character follows a traditional "alaturka" type, with ethics and disciplines found in Turkish Ottoman culture. But since he also follows a modernized lifestyle, one can say that he is a combination of Ottoman and European male characters. He is educated in both Ottoman and European subjects, he translates works from French, and he also provides Ottoman lessons to two girls in a British family. He perfectly fits himself into the society that is expressing itself in new forms; socially, culturally, and politically.

Through the life of these two characters, Midhat Efendi, with a simple and sometimes humorous tone, brings the reader's attention

to the scope of the Islamic Ottoman Empire and the introduction of Western culture. Râkım Efendi, through teaching the British girls, provides them with the importance of culture and how we want to represent it to other people around us. Learning about all aspects of life, he shows that it is not ethically or religiously harmful, for example, to read and enjoy love poetry. Although the novel touches a little bit on the topic of slavery in the Ottoman Empire, as well as the role of women at the time, these touches are not detailed enough to be part of the main content of the novel. The author, however, touches on the marriage institution, and through Râkım Efendi's private life, as uncommon as it might be, he says that a woman, even a slave, can be intelligent and educated, and at the same time able to freely choose a partner in her life.

The book addresses the question that Turkish society and the intellectuals of that era had struggled with: how would it be possible to enfold the Westernized life into the traditional Ottoman life, in such a way that one could be an educated modern Ottoman but at the same time be able to freely manage his private life in an Islamic-Ottoman manner.

Many topics such as ethics, religion, and culture in literature, especially when including dialogues and conversations with idioms particular to a language and culture, could be challenging to translate to English. Translation of this book is not an exception. However, the fine translation of this unique novel has provided the reader with a smooth reading, while also presenting the literary movement of the late nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire, when the Tanzimat reform was taking place. In general, by unfolding the daily lives of the two characters in this novel, the author brings awareness to the readers of what Ottoman society was experiencing in adjusting their private and public lives to the influence of modern Western culture.

SHAHRZAD KHOSROWPOUR

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

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32. By Sahar Mandour. Translated from the Arabic by Nicole Fares. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2016. Pp. xiii, 140. ISBN: 9780815610694 (paperback).

This book is the first English edition of Mandour's book titled *32*, which was originally published in Arabic in 2010. Sahar Mandour is a novelist and journalist who was born in Beirut; so far she has published four novels in Arabic. *32* was translated from Arabic into English by Nicole Fares, who is a translator from Lebanon and earned her M.F.A. in literary translation from the University of Arkansas. She is currently teaching creative writing and world literature at the same university while pursuing her Ph.D. in comparative literature and cultural studies.

This novel is a work of modern fiction in contemporary Lebanese literature. Mandour critically gives meaning to the life of women in Lebanon, or women immigrants in Lebanon, as she writes about the positive and negative aspects of their lives in her own simple yet sophisticated style. She touches on a few highly important topics in Lebanon and the Middle East in general, such as the social reality of female domestic workers in Lebanon, and religion, which is a sensitive topic in Lebanon and other Middle Eastern countries. Mandour wisely connects several issues of one nation to the living conditions in Beirut. She captures the accepted traditional society's norms but also fantasizes about a society where domestic workers are welcomed or homosexuals live a full life—a life which no one except themselves has the power to affect, and in which nobody could control or insult them.

She delivers long conversations that shift from the narrator to her group of friends or to herself, and at one point reveals to her friends in the story that she is preparing a novel or story from her daily life, including her friends and their characteristics. She amazingly plays with the context of these friendly and typical conversations all through the book and succeeds in bringing up more complex issues, such as gender structure in the workforce, especially after the Civil War, when she claims it had an important role in defining Lebanese identities and shaped so many adolescents' and adults' lives, including hers. She also skillfully shows how the politics governing a nation could affect people's social lives. In doing so, she shares the narrator's neighbor's life experience and how an unexpected moment in her life changed her destiny and pushed her to the edge and put an end to her life out of desperation. In this context, Mandour writes

about “a life in Beirut, a life of darkness and headaches, for those wanting to experience them both. There’s something in Beirut that makes the ending obvious from the beginning.”

By the end of her novel, the narrator knows how she is going to present her book, as she shares her feelings with her group of friends. She likens herself to a house with two television sets in two different rooms. Her life then, she says, would be similar to different television channels. One has to get the right channel and aim the remote control at the right television to get the life she wished for. Writing this novel, she affirms, she has developed new emotions that she could truly feel. As these new emotions sneak into her inner world and invite her to take control, she has learned not to escape from them and their mixed sensations. She describes her transition from age to age and from one life to another. It is quite possible that sometimes in transition, things of the past remain while others of the present begin to fade. The important thing is to fully live and convince herself that she has completed her task.

Toward the end of the novel, the translator adds that the narrator comes to a realization that what all people should do is take their lives one day at a time and write their story one page at a time, hoping that it may help them understand themselves, others, and their surroundings better.

This book is a well-written book with a professional translation. The conversations convey the narrator’s and others’ characters in the book in order to portray the life of women in Beirut. This is an appropriate source for any library with a literary collection, as well as any collection focused on gender, international, and Middle East studies and its literature.

SHAHRAZAD KHOSROWPOUR

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

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*Law and Legality in the Ottoman Empire and Republic of Turkey.*  
Edited by Kent F. Schull, M. Safa Saraçolu, and Robert F. Zens.  
Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2016. Pp. 207. ISBN:  
9780253020925 (paperback).

This volume is the expansion and culmination of articles presented at the Middle East Scholars Association’s annual

conference in 2013 and in the *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association's* Spring 2015 issue. The theme of the essays, organized by chronology, revolve around the relationship between law, legality, and legitimacy in the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkish state, with a particular view to correcting the simplified misperception of Ottoman legal practice popularized by sociologist Max Weber (d. 1920). Overall, the purpose is to advance our historical understanding of the complex interplay between social, cultural, political, and economic factors in the trend towards standardization, centralization, and rationalization of law as practiced by the Ottoman state and its successor.

Each of the nine scholarly articles represents a developing area of inquiry related to law, society, and history in Ottoman and Turkish studies. Timothy J. Fitzgerald explores the relationship of literacy and law during the transition from Mamluk to Ottoman rule in the Arabic-speaking world. Fitzgerald is particularly concerned with how the perspective of literacy can help historians understand popular engagement with law and politics. Hadi Hosainy examines the role of extra-judicial officers in the Sharia courts of seventeenth-century Istanbul. Based upon an analysis of two court cases, Hosainy argues that the early modern Sharia courts did not enjoy as much impartial independence as previously thought, as several actors had the potential to manipulate court proceedings for their own interests.

Michael Nizri examines four court cases dealing with the boundaries of property belonging to endowments. The elites sometimes attempted to convert public property into their own private property, even though the state always retained ownership in practice. M. Safa Saraçolu analyzes the Ottoman state's intervention into markets via market inspectors (*muhtasib*) and the setting of price-ceilings (*narh*). These practices were based in Islamic law but slowly gave way to new practices as these powers were delegated to provincial councils. Kenneth Cuno attempts to provide insight into the reorganization of Sharia courts in Egypt, which paralleled the reforms being made by their Ottoman imperial counterparts. Cuno argues that the modernization of the legal code had actually put women at a greater disadvantage than had earlier legal practices.

Nora Barakat argues that the current understanding historians have of legal pluralism in the late Ottoman state is in reality more complicated. An extra-state land market existed in the rural Syrian district of Salt, which although limited, was a challenge to the monopoly of state taxation instead of state-sanctioned pluralism.

Samy Ayoub addresses an important point of debate in the historical transmutation of decentralized Islamic law into centralized state law. According to Ayoub, the codification of the Hanafi law school in the form of *Mecelle* was not without precedent in the school itself. Kent F. Schull looks at the gradual centralization of criminal law and punishment by the late Ottoman state. Ottoman administrators eventually circumscribed the autonomy of local courts and introduced incarceration as the primary form of punishment. In the final article, Ellinor Morack shares her research on laws related to migrants who came to Turkey from Greece during the population exchange of 1923. The existence of a law itself does not necessarily mean it was uniformly applied; as Morack demonstrates, a number of different notions of law and legality were understood by various state administrations and populations affected by their policies.

In summary, the volume will likely interest scholars of Ottoman and Turkish studies, Islamic law studies, and Middle Eastern history in general. The content is most appropriate for graduate students and advanced scholars. There is no comprehensive bibliography, but sources are documented using Chicago-style footnotes.

JUSTIN PARROTT

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY IN ABU DHABI

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*The world is one place: Native American poets visit the Middle East.*  
 Edited by Diane Glancy and Linda Rodriguez. Kansas City:  
 BkMk Press, 2017. Pp. 119. ISBN: 9781943491070.

This book is an anthology that explores the viewpoints about the Middle East of a significant group of Native American poets, who have visited different parts of these regions at some point in their lives or have experienced them through the input of some significant others in their lives. Through their prose or poems, these writers give life to their thoughts, to their feelings, and to their cultural perspectives based on what they have experienced visiting these regions. The editors of this anthology included a vast part of the Arab world: Oman, Bahrain, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Libya, Palestine, and Yemen as well as Morocco, Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, and Turkey.



The preface explains how the objectives of the Native American poets who contributed to the book and their cultures are committed to the world community of nations, of whom they command attention and respect. Many Americans know the Middle East only from social media or journalists' reports, which can be suffused with catastrophes and conflicts. A poet's view, on the other hand, despite the fact that it could be political or religious, could portray ordinary moments so powerfully in presenting love, sorrow, and pain, or even particular instants, that there are no explanations for them. And this is something to which the world needs to pay attention: the moments in the ordinary lives of people who belong to those regions, in order to consider what some of the people in the Arab world are going through. This includes the millions of refugees and those suffering from ISIS in many Middle Eastern regions in the past few years.

This anthology is a collection of words from the contributors as well as the editors of the book, and it is divided into three categories reflecting places, people, and spirits of those regions as experienced by these poets, among whom are Native Americans who have served in the US armed forces and have received decorations as well as casualties. The work notes from each poet which precede their poems reflect the connections that each of them unknowingly has with one another and with the places, people, and spirits of those regions.

The book opens with a foreword from one of the editors, Diane Glancy, and its spirit section ends with a few pages by the other editor, Linda Rodriguez, on meditation in the Middle East and the United States. At the end, it has a short biography of the poets and contributors to this collection.

It is a unique book of poetry (and prose) that helps the reader to feel the momentum of these regions and to observe them having different languages, traditions, communities, views, cultures, and histories, yet being altogether as one place, one world.

In general, this anthology is a good resource for academic libraries with a focus on literature as well as on Middle East Studies. It is also a good read for anyone interested in finding out more about these regions through the eyes of a group of poets from outside them.

SHAHRZAD KHOSROWPOUR

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

## **GEORGE N. ATIYEH PRIZE WINNERS 2017**

The George N. Atiyeh Award is an annual affair in hopes of recognizing aspiring Middle East subject specialist librarians. This year's committee received four applications, all of which were worthy of this prestigious award. We awarded two exceptional applicants in Salma Abumeeiz and Lucy Flamm.

(1) Salma is currently enrolled at the University of British Columbia in the School of Library Archival and Information Studies (SLAIS) in Vancouver. Prior to commencing SLAIS she completed a B.A. and M.A., both in history, at the University of Windsor in Windsor, Ontario. Her M.A. thesis was titled, "Identity, Acculturation, and Honour: Tracing Arab-Canadian Women's Experiences through Oral History," and explored Arab diaspora communities in Canada. She has also interned at the Smithsonian Institute Library, where she worked closely with the Asian Pacific American Centre (APAC) and the Centre for Folklife and Cultural Heritage (CFCH).

(2) Lucy is currently enrolled at the University of Texas, Austin, in a double major for an M.A. in Middle East Studies and an M.A. in Information Science. Prior to commencing the double M.A. she was a graduate of Bard College, where she wrote her thesis, "Iranian Islands? Bahrain, Abu Masa, and the Tunbs," which was the 2015 Marc Bloch Prize Winner. She has worked in a number of library or library-related positions, including creating a bibliography of Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.; al-Quds Bard College, where she managed the Academic Resource Center and Library of the first Palestinian liberal arts institution; and the Bard Prison Initiative, where she organized materials for courses taught to incarcerated men while serving their sentences and coordinated interlibrary loan requests, access to archival materials, and digitization of resources. Finally, Lucy has also presented at Smolny College (St. Petersburg, Russia) and the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies.

Many congratulations, Salma and Lucy.

Sincerely,  
Sean E. Swanick (Chair)  
The George N. Atiyeh Prize Committee

## **George Atiyeh Award Essay:**

SALMA ABUMEEIZ

As I write this note, Executive Order 13780 is in full effect. Consequently, migrants from several countries—including Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, and Somalia—are currently restricted from entering the United States. This looms heavy as I consider two questions posed by former MELA president Sharon Smith at this year's annual meeting: "Can [Middle East librarians] really avoid the political atmosphere in their field?" and "Is there an obligation for [Middle East librarians] to participate in this atmosphere?" Indeed, the interconnectedness of politics and the production and dissemination of Middle East materials is nothing new. However, at this moment, activities among Middle East librarians concerning the region, its people, and the scholarship which surrounds them feel particularly resolute in their commitment to community building, partnership, and the promotion of a more diverse world. This undertaking occurs while Middle East librarians simultaneously develop their collections and adapt preservation practices to today's expanding digital environments.

This year's 2017 Middle East Librarians Annual Meeting, with its focus on digital scholarship and its impact on Middle East Studies, served as a testament to these aforementioned initiatives. It was indicative of the dedicated work of Middle East librarians who are currently engaged in promoting human inclusivity in an increasingly technologically-driven, divisive world. As one of this year's George Atiyeh Prize recipients, I had the invaluable opportunity to attend the meeting and learn from the conversations, projects, and practices of Middle East librarians, who are currently navigating both political and digital spheres. Topics explored at length included the state of open access in the Middle East, the ways in which multilingual subject headings can be better supported, and cross-cultural copyright implications, as well as the potential of Arabic Optical Character Recognition (OCR) within digitization projects. These discussions did more than shine light on the fascinating work of Middle East librarians. They also signaled the potential for preserving and

cultivating cultural heritage through careful digital scholarship, an initiative in which, as indicated by this year's MELA conference, Middle East librarians are at the forefront.

Attending this year's annual meeting was an invaluable experience. It not only provided me with an opportunity to engage with contemporary Middle East librarianship; it also introduced me to the incredible individuals who make up the Middle East librarian community. Their dedication to the field is deeply inspiring, and has left me with a sense of earnestness to participate in the invaluable work they do to promote research, cultural understanding, and diversity amid ever-shifting political and digital environments. I would like to extend special thanks to this year's prize committee—Sean Swanick, Robin Dougherty, and Heather Hughes—for their continued encouragement and mentorship throughout my George Atiyeh prize journey. As I enter my second semester as a Master of Library and Information Studies student at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada, I feel both immensely grateful for this experience, and eager to apply the lessons learned at this year's MELA Annual Meeting to my own studies and career aspirations.

## **George Atiyeh Award Essay:**

LUCY MUNSAT FLAMM

Through granting the George N. Atiyeh Prize the Middle East Librarians Association (MELA) provides exceptional exposure for young librarians with interest in materials from and relating to the region. In the fall of 2017, I began pursuing dual graduate degrees in Middle Eastern Studies and Information Science. Receiving the Atiyeh Prize enabled me to attend the November meetings of both the Middle East Librarians Association and the Middle East Studies Association conferences in Washington, D.C. Presentations ranged from addressing the state of existing collections across media to cataloging standards and expanded my understanding of the past, present, and future of the profession. I remain extremely grateful for not only the experience over the course of the week, but the enduring mentorship of the MELA community since then.

A passion for history, research, and patron support led me to pursue librarianship. Studying Middle Eastern history at Bard College enabled me to cultivate nuanced comprehension of regional trends and transformations. I applied this knowledge towards my thesis, which utilized archival materials to engage with historical memory and the diplomatic negotiations leading to the abandonment of Iran's long-standing claim to Bahrain. While at university I coordinated interlibrary loan and digitization requests for incarcerated men pursuing academic degrees. After graduating, I worked for the first Palestinian liberal arts college managing undergraduate and graduate access to print and digital materials. In this role, I also developed and delivered workshops concerning academic resources and research methods in the social sciences and humanities. Currently, I work at the UT Austin's library as the Graduate Research Assistant for digital archiving projects concerning the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and South Asia.

At the Middle East Librarians Association conference, the talks delivered by prominent members of the organization addressed new platforms, individual projects, and the landscape of opportunities and obstacles in the field. While each rewarding in their respective ways,

one presentation I greatly enjoyed was that of John Eilts, who spoke to the efforts of Stanford University and other institutions to digitize numerous mid-century Egyptian movie posters. In highlighting the existence of high-resolution digital surrogates with relatively no metadata he posed key questions concerning description efforts, copyright, and accessibility. Additionally, Dale Correa spoke to efforts to recover facets of Yemen's cultural heritage and intellectual history through the existing Robert Stookey microfilms. During his time in Yemen Stookey filmed manuscripts of collections held at private libraries—including the Mansur, Shami, and Jahhaf collections—on 16 millimeter film. Speaking to the junction of ethics and intent, Correa articulated the history of the microfilms whilst highlighting the nuances of post-custodial archiving.

The Atiyeh Prize provides the rich opportunity for early-career information professionals such as myself to be immersed in the administrative and technical components of the profession. I found myself not only learning from the panelists and general conversations, but from the yearly administrative meetings which take place throughout the conference. Sitting in on the discussions of the Middle East Materials Project (MEMP) and Ivy Plus Libraries consortium fostered a greater understanding of strategic decision making in collection development. The annual Library of Congress (LoC) updates from the D.C. divisions and the Cairo and Islamabad offices additionally provided a lens for considering the workflow of acquisitions, cataloging, and the role of the LoC overseas offices within this context. Furthermore, the conference's publishing and vendor showcase offered statistics and anecdotes to contextualize the transforming landscape of publishing in the region.

Learning did not end with MELA, for the Prize generously supports continued engagement with the Middle East Studies Association which follows. I relished the opportunity to spend the rest of the week attending panels which further expanded and contextualized my knowledge of the Middle East. Of particular note were multiple sessions addressing Iraqi identity and the problematic housing of millions of Ba'ath Arab Socialist Party documents at the Hoover Institution. The latter remains relevant given the recent seizing of Iraqi documents by Rukmini Callimachi of the *New York Times* to generate articles, publications, and podcasts despite lack of sanctioning by the applicable Iraqi authorities. The panel dedicated to Arabic script typography offered rich lessons in print historiography

and the quantitative components of digital encoding schemes for Arabic. The week of engagement with Middle Eastern librarianship, cataloging, and history was vibrant and plentiful, and only made possible by the annual generosity of the organization. I look forward to attending future meetings of the Middle East Librarians Association in the years to come.



## **Annual Meeting 2017**

### **MELA Business Meeting**

**November 16, 2017**

**George Washington University  
Washington, D.C.**

**MELA MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:** IMADELDIN ABUELGASIM, MICHAEL ALBIN, JOHN DUNCAN ARDEN, NORA AVETYAN, ELISABETH BALDWIN, NEDIM BALI, RANDALL BARRY, ZAINEB BAYAHY, JOYCE BELL, BRENDA BICKETT, ALI BOUTAQMANTI, GUY BURAK, DALE CORREA, PHILIP CROOM, MOHAMMAD DAGMAN, SARAH DEMOTT, HIRAD DINAVERI, ROBIN DOUGHERTY, DAVID FAUST, GEORGE FAWZY, GAYLE FISCHER, AKRAM HABIBULLA, MOHAMED HAMED, PETER HEREDICH, DAVID HIRSCH, MICHAEL HOPPER, MOZHGAN JALALZADEH, HEEVA KADIVAR, NAWAL KAWAR, WILLIAM KOPYCKI, JESSICA LAGAN, CONNIE LAMB, PETER MAGIERSKI, DEBORAH MARGOLIS, LAILA HUSSEIN MOUSTAFA, JUSTIN PARROT, CHRISTOPHER PERKINS, MEHDI RAHIMZADEH, KHALED REYAD, AJ ROBINSON, ANAÏS SALAMON, MARLIS SALEH, SHARON SMITH, DENISE SOUFI, AMANDA STEINBERG, SEAN SWANICK, ASUMAN TEZCAN, PATRICK VISEL, ELIZABETH WARAKSA, JOAN WEEKS, JAMES WEINBERGER, LAURA L. WONG

[SECRETARY NOTE: As a recording of the meeting was not available following the business meeting, these minutes have been compiled using officer and committee reports]

The meeting was called to order at approximately 9:00 am. The minutes of the 2016 meeting were approved.

#### **OFFICER REPORTS**

*PRESIDENT'S REPORT (SHARON SMITH):*

[Appended to these minutes]

*VICE-PRESIDENT AND PROGRAM CHAIR'S REPORT (AKRAM HABIBULLA):*

Akram thanked George Washington University for their generosity in hosting this year's meeting, as well as the members of the program committee who worked hard to find suitable presenters on the topic of digital scholarship.

*SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT (WILLIAM KOPYCKI):*

As secretary-treasurer I have two hats to wear. One is to document minutes of the meeting, which is done by transcribing the audio files and compiling the printed reports that are received by executive board officers and committee chairs. It requires a lot of effort on my side, but the use of technology and e-reporting makes this task much easier than it perhaps was for those who had this position before I started in this role back in 2004. They show what the association has accomplished, what has been discussed, who was doing what, etc. We can get a sense of what has worked, and sometimes detect what perhaps not worked, in the past. We may not always see the value in capturing the here and now, but for the future, they certainly become important. Not long ago, there was some discussion in the exec board of "why don't we do X?", and without going into detail of the nature of what X was, it was a matter of researching some rather legacy minutes; but thanks to having the complete backfile of *MELA Notes* online (and they are searchable) we were able to learn that "yes, such is a discussion of X from this particular meeting" and from this, we can get a sense of why that idea didn't work at the time. This is the sort of "institutional memory" that I like to preserve, and with MELA at 45 years, it is a reminder that as our membership grows and transitions from generation to generation, and that perhaps what we report and discuss today in 2017 will be of use to those who will be here years from now, whether it is two years or twenty years from now.

As treasurer, with this hat it is my pleasure to keep track of our finances, provide support to the rest of the executive board in planning things like our annual meeting and vendor showcase, and otherwise make payments or collect funds as deemed necessary. There's also the behind-the-scenes ordering and payment of services that few get to see, but I would like to thank Akram and the program committee and fellow exec for their help in this. Looking at the financial report for the organization, as usual you can see information about sources of

“income” and what our expenses are. My recent practice has been to share with the executive board the costs of meetings over the years, or how much it costs to have a dinner, and so forth. This year we are very fortunate to have this meeting space donated by GWU for MELA, and this helps keep our funds stable. It means that this type of support can help us in the years where we need to pay premium costs for our meeting, and we can maintain a reasonable standard that I think many are accustomed to. In looking at the fund balances, please note that our collective balance is \$48,160.26; from that amount, please be sure to deduct the \$13,000 that comprises the Wilkins Award Fund. This is a part of the main MELA treasury so our actual net balance is closer to \$38,000. One task I will do for the next year is gradually move funds from PayPal into our bank account, and then further move money from the checking account into the savings account, so we can take a little advantage from the minimal interest rates we earn from this. There’s always room to explore long-term investment of the Wilkins Fund money and place this in a separate account, although doing so may create new financial complexities and tax reporting issues for our association. I’d like to thank everyone for registering in advance and online; this makes my work easier on the day of these meetings. I’d especially like to thank our webmaster Justin for all his help in getting the tech side of registration going. Aside from a couple of glitches with a couple names not appearing on the list, which is all on me, our workflow is almost settled and we learn something new each year in the process.

*MELA NOTES EDITOR’S REPORT (MARLIS SALEH):*

During the year 2016–17, one annual issue of *MELA Notes*, number 90 (2017), will be published in print and will be distributed to the membership and subscribers. The issue will appear electronically at <http://www.mela.us/publications/mela-notes/mela-notes-archive/>.

The upcoming issue will consist of the following items:

- Articles (still to be finalized)
- 12 Book Reviews
- Books Received for Review 2016–17
- Award Announcements and Essays
- MELA Business Meeting 2016 Minutes and Reports

All book reviews that will be published in the 2017 issue have already been posted online in our blog, the MELA Notepad. The backlog of more recently received reviews has been liquidated; going forward, all reviews will be posted on the blog shortly after they are submitted, and then subsequently published in an issue of *MELA Notes*.

The latest issue of *MELA Notes* (number 89, 2016) was sent to JSTOR for digitization and inclusion in their database. The full run of *MELA Notes* is available as part of the Arts & Sciences IX Collection. Revenue sharing from JSTOR brought in \$3,698.38 this past year, including a supplement of \$2,000.00 for not imposing a moving wall.

*MELA Notes* is also available in EBSCO Host's Library & Information Science Source Publications database, beginning with issue 84 (2011) and going forward. It is possible that in the future a more extensive backfile will also be added. The electronic files for issue 89 (2016) have been transmitted to them. Increasing our journal's visibility, the full text is shared with non-EBSCO discovery services for indexing and searching (but not display), making the articles easier for researchers to find, regardless of what discovery service their library uses.

I plan to add a new section to *MELA Notes* which will feature member projects (digital or otherwise), collaborations, etc. This will take the form of short announcements to be submitted by the project participants in cases where a full-scale *MELA Notes* article may not be appropriate. I hope that this will help all of us keep abreast of the increasing number of important developments occurring in our field. I will send out a message shortly soliciting contributions and hope to receive a positive response.

As always, I continue to urge the membership to submit articles and to encourage colleagues to do so.

Again as always, I am extremely grateful for the assistance of my colleagues Jonathan Rodgers, past editor of *MELA Notes*, our book review editor, Rachel Simon, and our secretary-treasurer, William Kopycki.

*BOOK REVIEW EDITOR'S REPORT (RACHEL SIMON):*

Rachel reported that books continue to be received for review. She encouraged new members to participate in this activity. New book reviews continue to appear on the MELA Notepad blog. Serious reviewers with a proven track record of deliver can suggest books to

review; she will contact publishers to make any requests. Book reviews should be turned in within six months of delivery time of the book.

*WEBMASTER'S REPORT (JUSTIN PARROTT):*

Last year, the website redesign committee installed WordPress as the new content management system for the site, which replaced the old set of static HTML pages, and designed a new MELA logo. Since then, the site has greatly improved its functionality and utility. Moving forward, we are maintaining the current site configuration and implementing further improvements as appropriate.

We are now able to track statistics regarding our visitors to the site. The site averages 49 views per day, which naturally increases when new content is posted or around the time of the annual meeting. We are receiving traffic from Google outside of our membership, particularly from our book review content. We had over 15,000 views in 2017.

The home page now includes a translation of the MELA introduction into Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. We would like to add more non-English language content to the site as appropriate, but we are in need of qualified volunteer translators.

The site now has an SSL certificate, which means it loads as a secure green "http" site. The site did not have any significant security vulnerabilities previously, but the web environment in general, specifically on Google, is moving towards requiring websites to have an SSL certificate as a matter of best practice.

The social media committee continues to administer MELA's Facebook and Twitter pages. We gained over 300 followers on Facebook in 2017, and our page had more than 50,000 "impressions" or views in the Facebook news feed. Our Twitter followers now exceed 400. The editorial guidelines for our social media pages mirror those of MELANET. What is appropriate for MELANET is appropriate for social media. We ask the membership to continue to share relevant articles, publications, and professional opportunities over MELANET and to the social media committee for sharing.

Furthermore, we ask the membership and committee chairpersons to send the Webmaster updated content regarding committee members, changing affiliations, and any other outdated information.

*LISTSERV MANAGER'S REPORT (EVYN KROPF):*

All are reminded of the virtual community that is the MELANET-L listserv, which is intended for discussion of issues directly relevant to Middle East librarianship but notably excludes discussion of vendor relations and commercial advertisements. The list conditions/guidelines for posting are available online for review, on the MELA website under the About MELA >> Communications >> MELANET-L Email List tab.

All are welcome to subscribe and may contact the list manager via email (listowner@mela.us), via the form on the MELA website, or via Google Groups. There are currently 543 subscribed email addresses (some members are subscribed under multiple addresses). The list manager has added roughly 30 new subscribers since last year's MELA meeting. A few colleagues that have moved on to other fields, retired, etc., requested to be unsubscribed from the list.

As required, a periodic reminder of the list conditions/guidelines for posting was sent by the list manager this year. All are reminded that MELANET continues to be archived by both Gmane and Google Groups. The Gmane archive is public and searchable over the open web.

Also this year, following the retirement of our colleague John Eilts, the List Manager set up and took up management of a new Google Group for the Middle East Book Vendors List, formerly hosted at Stanford. This list is also mentioned under a note on the MELA website under the About MELA >> Communications >> MELANET-L Email List tab. Colleagues are reminded that this list is for the exchange of information about the vendors of library materials from the countries of the Middle East. Vendors are not permitted to subscribe to the list so that open discussion may take place. Members are also asked not to forward any list postings.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

*ATIYEH PRIZE COMMITTEE (SEAN SWANICK):* Sean announced the winners of this year's Atiyeh Prize, which were Salma Abumeeiz and Lucy Flamm.

*MEMP REPORT (DAVID HIRSCH):* (MEMP met the previous afternoon; these are the highlights of the meeting.) David Hirsch and Sean Swanick have been re-elected to three-year terms on the Executive Committee. MEMP has total available funds of \$43,111.16.

A number of expensive proposals were submitted by Northwestern University; unfortunately there was nobody present to discuss the proposals. Because of the lack of available funds, only a few of the submitted proposals could be funded (*Liberation* and *Moudjahid*, both from Algeria). *Malumat* from Turkey was approved with matching funds, while *Sada al-Sham* was approved for digitization.

The issue of microfilming vs. digitization was raised. Digitization costs approximately twice as much as microfilming. As a point to be taken into consideration in deciding, Judy informed the group that CRL will match AMP funds to be applied to digitization projects, up to \$5,000 per AMP per year.

Last year Michael Hopper had initiated a discussion of the possibility of each of our institutions being responsible for acquiring specific newspaper(s) in order to ensure that some titles are not being overlooked and collected by no one. Sean Swanick and Guy Burak continued the discussion, noting that the first step is to determine who is currently collecting which titles. A starting place would be to focus on the newspapers collected by the Library of Congress (400 plus titles) and to see which other institutions collect them, to determine titles that are under- or over-held.

*EDUCATION AND MENTORSHIP COMMITTEE (CONNIE LAMB):* Committee members are: Connie Lamb, Chair; Anaïs Salamon, mentorship coordinator; Amanda Steinberg; Heather Hughes; Patrick Visel; Mariette Atallah (added this year).

A number of resources can be found on the Education Committee webpage, including: professional development resources, Middle East Studies programs, Middle East library collections, and librarianship/studies associations and resources.

We would like to revive the Middle East Librarianship class that was taught at Simmons a couple of years ago, either there or through some other university. This is an online course and we have an outline for it (developed by Ali) but we need some teachers, as we think it would be better done with team teaching. If anyone is interested in participating, please contact me.

This year the committee worked mostly on the mentoring program. The report for that was given by Anaïs Salamon, and the progress includes: updated webpages for the program as well as merged mentor and mentees forms converted to electronic form

(thanks to Justin). At present, we have 15 active partnerships and one mentee on waiting list. We are always looking for mentors; thank you for considering.

*ENDANGERED ARCHIVES COMMITTEE (LAILA MOUSTAFA AND DALE CORREA)*: Resource list nearly complete: the committee hopes to get this on our webpage on the MELA website, but whether it will be entirely present on the MELA website or a link to a LibGuide at one of our institutions is still under discussion. The committee is reaching out and looking for partners, such as the Digital Library of the Middle East, to build on our network of cultural heritage protection and disaster management expertise. A call for new members will go out with beginning of spring semester (U.S. calendar). This is co-chair election year: an email will be sent out regarding elections.

*COMMITTEE ON CATALOGING (NORA AVETYAN)*: Members of the committee include: Amal Morsy, Denise Soufi, Evyn Kropf, Asuman Tezcan, Iman Dagher; Joyce Bell as (ALA/CC:AAM liaison), Allen Maberry (ex-officio for Library of Congress).

I would like to thank ConCat committee members for serving on this committee and their participation.

The Committee on Cataloging met three times in 2017 via Google Hangout and Zoom.

The committee primarily discussed the ConCat annual workshop and some other presentation ideas.

This past year our committee organized a workshop titled “The Road to Digital Discovery is Paved with Standards—Metadata Standards & Applications for Digital Resources.” The workshop will be presented by Claudia Horning, the Director of Metadata Services, part of the Cataloging & Metadata Center at the UCLA Library.

We will have a half an hour presentation by Randall Barry, the Chief at Library of Congress, Asian & Middle Eastern Division, on topics on non-Roman cataloging.

During our meetings we discussed the MELA Cataloging Site and updates.

Our committee continues adding new subject headings and classifications pertinent to Middle East cataloging, every three or four months.

We discussed ISBD punctuation at an UPCO meeting: ISBD punctuation has no function in new cataloging practices, especially in



a Linked Data environment. Discussion about eliminating ISBD punctuation was held and a majority of people present came out in favor of the elimination of the punctuation, but also expressed concerns that some institutions might not be financially ready to take on this new initiative. However, all agreed to continue the discussion on the subject.

The committee was informed about CC:AAM (Committee on Cataloging: Asian and African Materials) activities through our liaisons.

The MELA Committee on Cataloging has no openings this year, but we would like to discuss the option of accepting an intern.

*PARTINGTON AWARD (EVYN KROPF)*: Because the Partington Award was given to two persons during the 2016 meeting, the committee decided to postpone giving out the award this year.

*NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GUY BURAK)*: Guy reported that the e-voting for this year's election went without any incidents. Dale Correa was elected to the position of vice president/program chair and Anaïs Salamon for member-at-large.

There being no new business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 11:15 am.

Respectfully submitted,

William Kopycki  
Secretary-Treasurer

**Treasurer's Report for Fiscal Year 2017  
(November 5, 2016–November 10, 2017)**

**INCOME**

Dues, subscriptions	\$2,533.72
JSTOR royalties from <i>MELA Notes</i>	3,698.38
2016 (remainder) and 2017 meeting registration	3,786.16
2016 (remainder) and 2017 MELA dinner	1,539.35
2016 (remainder) and 2017 meeting sponsorships	4,138.25
Mailing list rental (4 lists)	388.50
Bank interest	1.67
Wilkins Fund	244.20
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$16,330.23</b>

**EXPENSES**

MELA 2016 meeting expenses	\$11,714.09
MELA 2017 meeting expenses	300.00
Vendor Showcase breakfast 2016	2,764.23
2016 Atiyeh Awards	1,050.00
2016 MELA Dinner	2,725.18
<i>MELA Notes</i> #89 printing and mailing	1,632.85
Partington Award	200.00
Wilkins Award	1,100.78
Postage	13.75
Memorial donation: UPenn	500.00
Memorial flowers	534.00
Webhosting renewal and maintenance	430.79
Refund (registrations)	243.67
Bank fees	21.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$23,230.34</b>

**PNC Bank Checking account as of November 10, 2017** \$14,346.29

**PNC Bank Savings account balance as of November 10, 2017** 5,444.24

**PayPal Account Balance as of November 10, 2017** 28,369.73

**TOTAL** **\$48,160.26**

**Wilkins Fund to date (included in account totals above)** \$13,945.44

As of November 10, 2017 MELA has 91 members paid up through 2017. 61 members are paid or renewed until 2018. 19 new names have been added to the database since November 5, 2016, Total membership count at the time of the 2017 meeting is 108.

As of November 10, 2017 there are 5 library subscriptions to *MELA Notes*.

Respectfully submitted,

William J. Kopycki  
Secretary-Treasurer

**Presidential Address**  
**Sharon C. Smith**  
**Middle East Librarians Association**  
**17 November 2017**

Good morning. Thank you all for being here today.

I am Sharon Smith, founding director of the Aga Khan Documentation Center at MIT (Cambridge, MA) and, for the next few hours, President of MELA. It has been my pleasure to serve in this capacity for MELA and I thank all those who have assisted me throughout the year, including MELA exec board and membership. My thanks to our presenters, vendors, and participants for making this meeting a success. Thanks to George Washington University for hosting us and to Amanda (who we—under the overarching umbrella of the Aga Khan Program—stole for Harvard).

Further, I am especially delighted to usher in our 45<sup>th</sup> year as a professional organization. A major milestone and worthy of much celebration.

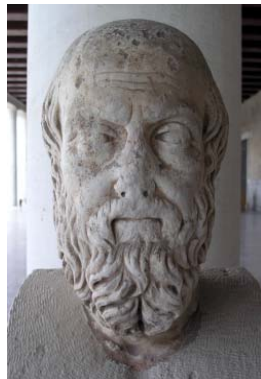
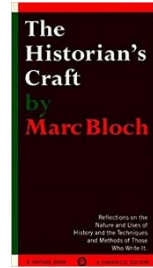
As you all know, MELA is a non-profit, **non-political** body. As my predecessor's year came to an end in November 2016, her presidential address was decidedly and appropriately non-political. Elections in the U.S. were over, and a new president declared, but not in office and not fully understood, almost an unknown entity at that time. Since then, for most, the past year was one spent in an unsettled, uneasy state.

While avoiding political alliances or allegiances, can we really avoid the political atmosphere with regard to our field (Middle East Librarianship/Studies) today? I found this challenging and have struggled in writing my presidential address in a way that does not privilege one political belief over another. For, regardless of one's political affiliation or personal opinion, the impact on our work, on our members, stakeholders, and users, has been and continues to be palpable.

Remaining true to our bylaws and identity as a non-political body, what can MELA do?

- Outreach.
- Community building.

- Communicate, collaborate, and partner (outside the box) with our colleagues and those not represented here. For example, the Iraqi architects archives held in AKDC shared with students at University of Baghdad with technology—allowing them to access to important documents detailing their own history, heritage, and culture.
- Be mindful of diversity, inclusion, and social justice.
- Acknowledge the agenda we bring to our work—and we all do have an agenda (in the vein of E. H. Carr's *What is History?* and *The Historian's Craft* by Marc Bloch, it is impossible to separate our own history from that which we produce).



Everyone pictured here has an agenda, even me (far right).

We have acknowledged an increased need to reach out to MENASA (Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia); to be inclusive and embrace opportunities to assure, support, and assist when and where possible.

**MENASA**



Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia

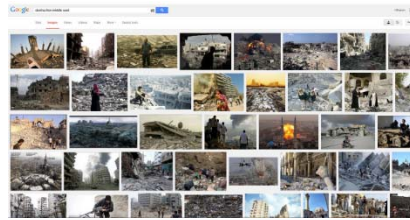
We will find/develop mechanisms for outreach and mutual participation—and mutual it must be. As information workers, we should be ever vigilant to ensure that one's culture is not dominating over or dependent upon another; rather, we should seek a global approach to comprehend the links and interdependencies that have formed and informed, and continue to form and inform, all cultures within our purview. The view expressed here is that this globalism should not be evaluated simply by how one society might compare to another, but rather as a commensurate evaluation demonstrating the significant achievements of each and all societies.

The theme of this conference, *Digital Scholarship and Middle East Librarianship*, is broad and was addressed by a variety of wonderful and engaging speakers yesterday. A large part of the discussion was around how **Digital Scholarship** (emphasis on the digital) can work with very real and immediate affect and result.

As we know, cultural heritage and the built environment throughout the Middle East (writ large) is at tremendous risk.



The ravages of war have become part of the vernacular through the advancements of technology. Inundated by the daily explosion of media from, and on, the Middle East, presented rapid fire from a plethora of producers and meant to be consumed wholly and without cognizance of the creator's intent, context and meaning are lost.

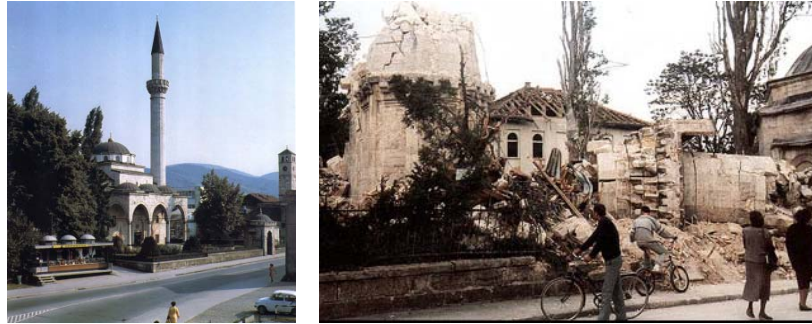


As librarians, indeed as curators and creators of information (I will return to this terminology shortly), we consider the opportunities, constraints, intentions, and consequences—planned and not—of the production,

presentation, and dissemination of these materials with focus on the digitization of materials about and/or from the Middle East and Muslim societies.

Can Digital Scholarship defend social justice? Clearly, the use of such media helped my colleague, mentor, and friend, Andras Riedlmayer, when he testified at The Hague regarding the systematic eradication of cultural monuments and destruction of cultural heritage in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the war. His pioneering work set the standard for such cases.





Ferhat-pasina Dzamija (Mosque). Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Left: 1982. Right: May 1993.





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## Kosovo Cultural Heritage

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In preparing my exhibition, *Burned Books and Blasted Shrines: Cultural Heritage under Fire in Kosovo*, I took my little packet of burned books up to the paper conservators at the State Center for Conservation, on the top floor of Haverth's Paper Art Museum. I watched as the conservator picked out these small bits of charcoal – the carbonized fragments of manuscripts and old books. They were hard and black, some had shiny surfaces that reflected the afternoon sunlight. Looking closely, one could distinguish: smooth, blackened fragments of leather bindings, loose fibers or carbonized pieces of woven cloth from the inside of the spines of books; chunks of charcoal in which one could still see the fused layers of pages; still smaller fragments of burned paper, black charcoal dust. One larger piece, softer and grayish in color, not completely turned to carbon, was still recognizable as a book: the remains of a spine, or perhaps the fore-edge of a volume, less than an inch wide and perhaps 2-3 inches long, with the curled edges of charred pages still visible on the narrow ends. It had come from the burned-out interior of a 15th-century mosque in Pec.

In my office, I keep a copy of a poem, an elegy for the burned Sarajevo library by a Bosnian poet, which talks about the removal of tons of such cinders from the ruins of Bosnia's burned out National Library in Pristina: the National Library site stands, but an estimated half of all the books in public libraries in Kosovo – nearly a million books – were destroyed in 2008. It is a story about the destruction of the human production.

VIEW THE COLLECTION
30.8.2010

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## Kosovo Cultural Heritage

109 Images, 5 publications in collection

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## Kosovo Cultural Heritage

109 Images, 5 publications in collection

### Destruction of Cultural Heritage in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1992-1996: A Post-War Survey Of Selected Municipalities

CITATION  
Radmayer, Andrija J. 2002. Destruction of Cultural Heritage in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1992-1996: A Post-War Survey Of Selected Municipalities. Expert Report commissioned by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

DESCRIPTION  
Commissioned by the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and used in the war crimes trial of Slobodan Milosevic, this thirty-one page report summarizes the damage to cultural and religious heritage of Bosnian Muslim and Bosnian Croat (Roman Catholic) communities during the 1992-1996 conflict with Serb forces. It is the result of fieldwork conducted in Bosnia-Herzegovina in July 2002 and is accompanied by a Flickr database (not yet available) that documents in detail 292 potential sites in nineteen municipalities. The religious and cultural sites to be surveyed included, but were not limited to, places of worship, libraries, educational buildings and cultural sites. Sixty percent of the sites listed were inspected first hand, while documentation on other sites was collected from a variety of sources.

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So, here, I give a resounding **YES**.

However, with any discussion of digitization, I believe we must acknowledge the issue of the “digital divide.” There are very real social and economic inequities of this digital era and their effect cannot be minimized; further, these inequities can contribute to a “digital colonization” process. Therefore, while digitization—the apparatus of digital scholarship—is most often viewed as philanthropic, and I believe everyone in this room and organization has the very best intentions and is prepared to deal with this issue, there remains an inequality and—food for thought—this inequality is important as it can be used to prevent, assert different narratives.

Why curators? Why creators? I use this terminology very deliberately. We are Middle East Librarians—says so in our name—however, our role is/has been changing/changed dramatically over recent years. There are now huge amounts of data and a vast array of content types to deal with, no longer the simple pleasures of a book! In this ever-growing assortment of materials and types, we are making decisions that lead to overall knowledge production: Our curatorial role and the decisions made are impacting the same.

Digital library or research portal? Metadata schema, standards, naming, quantity versus quality, and the numerous technological challenges we face have made our jobs that much more complex—throw in languages, and even more so!

Is there an obligation to participate? Well .... Some of you may be familiar with these words, “The past is knowledge; the present our mistake; and the future we always leave too late.”



Paul Weller  
[Style Council]  
“My Ever  
Changing  
Moods” from  
album *Café Bleu*.  
London: Polydor  
Records, 1984

In this time of diminishing (or diminished) understanding of cultures and societies outside one's own, let us not leave the future until it is too late. View the present for what it is; address the issues that it created/creates; and participate through actively ensuring our work informs not only our immediate stakeholders, but truly informs a generation, and those to come, to build a more inclusive, diverse, and just world through disseminating knowledge.

All my best wishes and support for our incoming executive board and our new President, Akram Khabibullaev.

